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PDF

POCKET **MARRAKESH**



Discover twice the city in half the time

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POCKET
MARRAKESH

Helen Ranger

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FROM TOP LEFT: ANDRZEJ LISOWSKI/TRAVEL/SHUTTERSTOCK, FRANTICOO/SHUTTERSTOCK

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The Journey Begins Here

Marrakesh has been drawing in crowds for centuries, from the time of caravans crossing Saharan sands to trade gold and salt. It's still dazzling visitors, with the razzamatazz of Djemaa El Fna, museums grand and small, glorious riads, entrancing souqs, tranquil gardens, a vibrant food scene and a dash of new city glamour. Despite the city suffering some damage in the 2023 earthquake, repairs are mostly complete, and Marrakesh has emerged refreshed and vibrant. Dive in!



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Helen writes about African destinations for Lonely Planet, and runs a consultancy for bespoke travel in Morocco.

Souq Haddadine (p71)

CHECCO2/SHUTTERSTOCK







THE BEST

Architectural Experiences

Marrakesh's monuments are truly impressive, from the graceful lines of the 12th-century Koubba to the 19th-century Bahia Palace. You'll find breathtaking plaster arabesques, intricate *zellige* (geometric tilework) and magnificent cedarwood.



Be entranced by Marrakesh's showstopper, the **Ben Youssef Medersa**, a medieval Islamic school with spectacular decoration. (p84)

Find the right angle to photograph the stately 77m **Koutoubia** minaret with its multifoil arches, green and white *zellige* and stepped merlons. (p50)

Be impressed by the red walls of the **Badi Palace**, built to show off the Sultan's wealth but now in ruins. (p104; pictured)



Wonder at the graceful lines of the **Almoravid Koubba**, built in 1117, with its remarkable ceiling, floral patterns and calligraphy. (p86)

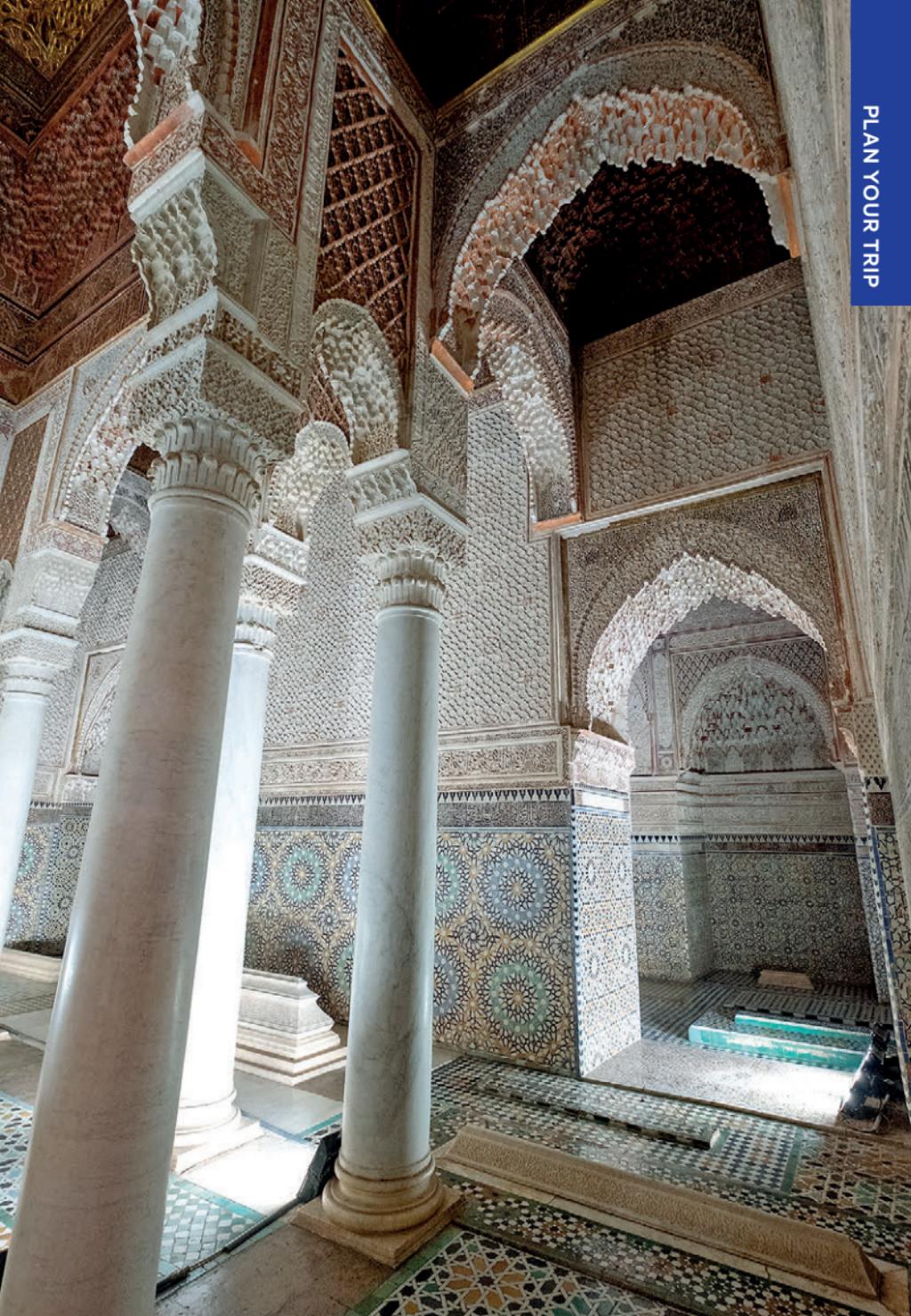
Peek through the doorway into the Chamber of 12 Pillars at the **Sadian Tombs** to see elaborate *zellige* and gilded honeycomb arches. (p100)

Wander the courtyards, gardens and decorated riads of the **Bahia Palace** built in the 1860s. (p98; pictured)

Right: Saadian Tombs (p100)

FROM LEFT: SAID MRIGUA/SHUTTERSTOCK, SAATON/SHUTTERSTOCK, LOIS GOBE/SHUTTERSTOCK

PLAN YOUR TRIP





THE BEST

Experiences on Djemaa El Fna

At the very heart of Marrakesh, Djemaa El Fna entices the crowds to take part in the razzle-dazzle from early morning to late at night with its shops, cafes, food vendors and performers.



Go early and sip a freshly squeezed fruit juice while the street vendors set up their stalls on the **square**. (p42; pictured)

Taste your way around the **food stalls** by night: try snails, *tanjia* (slow-cooked lamb stew), *brochettes* (kebabs) or fried fish, topped off with gingery cake. (p45)

Learn all about the history of the Djemaa El Fna performers at the **Musée du Patrimoine Immatériel** (Museum of Intangible Heritage) right on the square. (p47)

Be entertained by the Gnaoua musicians, acrobats, singers, male belly dancers and boxers entrancing the locals by night on the **square**. (p42; pictured)

Climb up to the rooftop of **Zeitoun Café** for the best sunset views of the Koutoubia minaret – the best spot for capturing the excitement below. (p59)



THE BEST

Shopping Experiences

Marrakesh is one of the world's great shopping destinations. The full gamut of Moroccan crafts can be found in the souqs, while concept stores stock top designers.

Browse the outlets in **Centre de la Femme Artisane** for the perfect souvenir. (p79)

Find the ideal statement piece for your home at **Mustapha Blaoui**. (p117)

Be dazzled by rugs in **Les Nomades de Marrakech**, woven by women in the High Atlas Mountains. (p93)

Leaf through gorgeous coffee-table books and smart accessories at the **Jardin Majorelle**. (p122)

Sniff your way through the deliciously scented cosmetics at **Naturom**. (p60)

Wend your way to **Rahba Kedima** for spices, baskets and trendy boutiques. (p72)

Les Nomades de Marrakech (p93)





THE BEST

Food Experiences

The subtle use of spices alongside a love of fresh produce makes Moroccan cooking some of the world's finest. In the medina, traditional cuisine abounds, while restaurants in the Ville Nouvelle take a more inventive approach.



Hop between the food stalls at **Djemaa El Fna** sampling snails, grills, fried fish and *tanjia*. (p58; pictured)

Sip teas from the 12 regions of Morocco at the exquisite **1112 Marrakech**, followed by a visit to its tea museum. (p91)

Dip into the best of traditional Moroccan fare at **Sahbi Sahbi** in the Ville Nouvelle and try dishes usually only found in homes. (p137)



Seek out the very best couscous at **Naima**'s tiny hole-in-the-wall restaurant in Kāat Ben Nahid. (p92)

Sample curvy gazelle's horns (pictured), *ghriba* (cookies) and *chebakia* dripping with sesame seeds and honey at **Pâtisserie des Princes**. (p59)

Learn to cook Moroccan-style at **La Maison Arabe**'s state-of-the-art cooking school in Bab Doukkala. (p116)

Right: Traditional mint tea

FROM LEFT: DAINIS DERICS/SHUTTERSTOCK, PICTURE PARTNERS/SHUTTERSTOCK, FULI03/SHUTTERSTOCK

PLAN YOUR TRIP





MARIA ALBU/SHUTTERSTOCK



Bahia Palace (p98)

THE BEST

Art & Design Experiences

Marrakesh is steeped in ancient artistry: palaces and riads are a riot of decoration. Craft traditions are kept alive by artisans in the souqs and inspire the contemporary art scene in Gueliz.

Mosey on down to the **Musée de la Musique** to see the jewel-like interior restored to its Saadian-era glory. (p68)

Venture deep into the souqs to **Souq Haddadine** where the blacksmiths ply their trade. (p71)

Be wowed by the art at **DaDa Marrakech** and its tempting, arty bookshop. (p57)

Tie on your apron for an Artisan Tour with **Moroccan Food Adventures**, trying your hand at mosaic tiles, wool dying or brass etching. (p54)

Visit beautiful **Bahia Palace** with its courtyard of marble and zellige, glorious ceilings and magnificent sculpted plaster. (p98)

Take an artisan course with a *maâlem* (master) at **Fonoun Zawya**. (p114)



THE BEST

Cultural Experiences

The original tribes of North Africa, the Amazigh people, have a distinct culture, from languages to art, costumes to music. Visit some excellent museums to learn more.



Gaze at the fabulous Amazigh jewellery (pictured) on show at the **Monde des Arts de la Parure** in the Kasbah. (p105)

Dance along to Amazigh music at **Cafe Clock**'s Saturday night concerts when Houariyat – a women's band – performs. (p104)

Visit the superb **Musée Pierre Bergé des Arts Berbères** in the Jardin Majorelle to marvel at Amazigh art, textiles and jewellery. (p124)



Seek out **Funduq Louarzazi** at Bab Ftouh to find ancient Tuareg leather bags, wooden saddle pegs and other treasures. (p55)

Watch the Gnaoua musicians and dancers in their bright satin outfits and shell-encrusted hats perform on **Djemaa El Fna**. (p42; pictured)

Listen to the ancient art of storytelling at the **World Storytelling Café** in Kâat Ben Nahid. (p92)



THE BEST

Museum Experiences

Marrakesh has almost 20 museums in the medina that not only have fascinating collections, but are also housed in superb riads. The ultramodern Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech graces the Ville Nouvelle.



Drop into the **Musée du Patrimoine Immatériel** to find out all about the characters on Djemaa El Fna. (p47)

Discover 1300 years of Moroccan costumes at the **Musée de l'Élégance Marocaine** (Museum of Moroccan Elegance). (p91)

Explore the **Musée des Confluences Dar El Bacha** and wonder at the wealth of the former pasha. (p69; pictured)

Be inspired by the fabulous couture collection and art exhibitions at the **Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech**. (p127)

Enjoy the beautiful riad architecture of Dar Si Saïd, as you swat up on carpets at the **National Museum of Weaving and Carpets**. (p54; pictured)

Learn about the Jewish history of Marrakesh at the still-functioning **El Azama Synagogue**. (p105)

Right: **El Azama Synagogue** (p105)

FROM LEFT: CKTRAVELS.COM/SHUTTERSTOCK, MITZO/SHUTTERSTOCK, LOIS GOBE/SHUTTERSTOCK





Jardin Majorelle (p122)

THE BEST

Experiences in the Ville Nouvelle

Originally built for French colonists during the Protectorate years (1912–56), art deco houses and office blocks still exist today, along with wide boulevards, apartments and parks.

Tour the contemporary art galleries and art deco gems in Gueliz on our **walking tour.** (p134)

Experience Marrakchi coffee culture, starting at **ThirtyFive**, with its menu of art, music and culture. (p138)

Shop till you drop at **33 Rue Majorelle** for clothing, accessories, jewellery and homewares. (p139)

Count the koi in the pools and buy a tin of Majorelle blue to paint your own flower pot at the **Jardin Majorelle.** (p122)

Taste the very best produce cooked to perfection at **Farmers** in Gueliz. (p137)

Imagine walking the runway in a couture show at **Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech.** (p127)



THE BEST

Hammam Experiences

The quintessential Moroccan experience after a day of dusty sightseeing exploits, try the centuries-old Moroccan ritual involving a steam bath, wash and vigorous *gommage* (scrub-down). It will leave you fresh and invigorated.

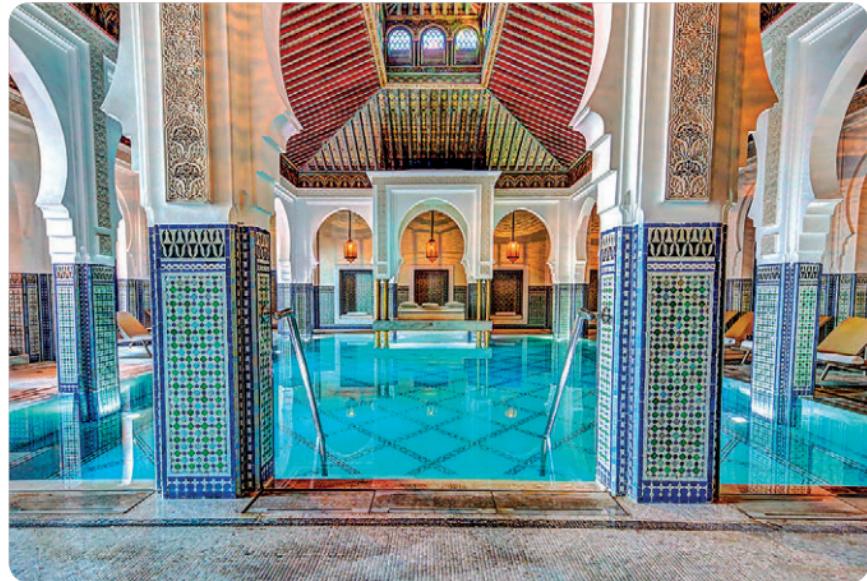
Join the locals at the beautifully renovated, public **Hammam Mouassine** and opt for the massage too. (p73)

Splurge on a top-end hammam experience with massage and facial at **La Mamounia Spa**. (p56)

Choose between argan oil and prickly pear oil to banish wrinkles – or get both – at **Arganino**. (p78)

Buy a kessa (exfoliating glove), some gooey black soap and some ghassoul (clay used in hammams) at **Rahba Kedima** to try it all back home. (p72)

La Mamounia (p56)





THE BEST

Country Getaway Experiences

Sometimes you just have to escape the city for somewhere less frenzied. Consider a poolside jaunt, a garden museum or some thrilling rides in the Agafay stony desert.



Make a beeline for the **Water Museum** in the Palmeraie to find out how water is managed in drought-ridden Morocco. (p133)

Set off in a vintage sidecar for an exciting day in **Agafay**, riding camels or zooming around on a quad or buggy. (p140; pictured)



Explore the wonderful gardens and art museums of the **Musée de la Palmeraie** (pictured) and the **Musée Farid Belkahia**. (p131)

Relax round the pool and enjoy lunch at **La Bohème** in Agafay, and stay on for a sunset dinner and entertainment. (p140)



Best for Kids

Make your own souvenir at **Zwaq**

Art: learn the art of *zouak*, colourful traditional painting on wood, and take home a framed mirror or a tray. (p74)

Learn how to say hello in Darija, some interesting customs and etiquette, and how to write your name in Arabic at **Cafe Clock's** Moroccan Culture 101 workshop. (p104)

Try scoring a bottle of soda with a fishing rod on **Djemaa El Fna**, or watch the evening entertainers and practise twirling your head like the Gnaoua musicians. (p42)

Visit the Palmeraie's fascinating **Water Museum** to see how water is managed in a desert oasis. (p133)

What will it be – gliding across the desert on a camel or an off-road adventure on a quad or buggy? Try both on a day trip to **Agafay**. (p140)

Best for Free

Wander **Djemaa El Fna**'s evening carnival to watch musicians, dancers, acrobats and boxers entertain locals and visitors alike. (p42)

Escape the heat with a saunter through the enchanting **Koutoubia Gardens** surrounding the mosque, with its tall palms, masses of roses and shady benches. (p51)

Stroll down Rue Semmarine to **Rahba Kedima** through the souqs to browse lanterns, ceramics, clothing, baskets and more: the deeper you go, the more artisans you'll come across. (p72)

Start at **Passage Ghandouri** and follow our walking tour to visit the galleries in Gueliz for your fill of contemporary art and art deco buildings. (p136)

Week nights at **Cafe Clock** feature storytelling and concerts: go on a Wednesday and you can join in the jam session with local musicians. (p104)



Perfect Days

Dive into medina life with a visit to the major monuments, choose from the many museums and add a sprinkling of shopping in the souqs before an evening on Djemaa El Fna.



Ben Youssef Medersa (p84)



DAY ONE

Only Have One Day?

MORNING

Visit the magnificent **Ben Youssef Medersa** (p84), the **Koubba** (p86) and the adjacent **Musée de Marrakech** (p90). Stop for tea at **1112 Marrakech** (p91), then view a slice of old Marrakesh in **Maison de la Photographie** (p87).

AFTERNOON

Head south to the kasbah (fortress) to view the glorious ceilings of **Bahia Palace** (p98). Climb the ramparts of the **Badi Palace** ruins (p104; pictured), then visit the **El Azama Synagogue** (p105). Save the **Saadian Tombs** (p100) for when it is bathed in late-afternoon sunshine.

EVENING

After dinner on **Djemaa El Fna** (p42), do a loop around the floodlit **Koutoubia Mosque** (p49), before returning for music on the square followed by craft beers at **Kabana** (p60).

**DAY TWO**

A Weekend Trip

MORNING

Hit the central souqs early, when they're quiet. Sniff out spices at **Place Rahba Kedima** (p72; pictured), peek inside the **fanadiq** (inns once used by caravans; p74) of Rue Dar El Bacha and visit the **Musée des Confluences** (p69) before retreating to the Islamic gardens of **Le Jardin Secret** (p66).

AFTERNOON

Admire the restored finery on show at **Musée de la Musique** (p68), then trawl for souvenirs amid the cool boutiques of **Souq Cherifia** (p78) and in the concept store of **Different** (p79).

EVENING

Scrub off the souq dust and rejuvenate with a hammam and massage (if you're feeling brave), in the public **Hammam Mouassine** (p73).

DAY THREE

A Short Break

MORNING

Make a dash for the bamboo groves and Musée Pierre Bergé des Arts Berbères at **Jardin Majorelle** (p122; book online at least 24 hours ahead). Combine this with the excellent **Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech** (p127) next door.

AFTERNOON

Hunt out Gueliz' art deco architecture and hop between contemporary art galleries (p134). Or head back to the medina to swat up on carpets at **Dar Si Saïd** (p54), and visit nearby **Musée Tiskiwin** (p55) for ethnographic exhibits from across North Africa.

EVENING

Take a stroll through lively **Place des Ferblantiers** (p104) en route to **Cafe Clock** (p104; pictured) in the Kasbah, to check out the evening's live music.



If You Have More Time

Get active on a cycling tour through the medina with **Pikala Bikes** (p114) or drop in to **Dar Anis Yoga Studio** (p114) for a yoga class.

Visit some of the quirkier museums like the **Musée de l'Élégance Marocaine** (Museum of Moroccan Elegance; p91) or **Monde des Arts de la Parure** (Jewellery Museum; p105). Check out the website of **Musée de la Musique** (p68) for news of its weekly concerts.

Call in at **DaDa Marrakech** (p57) to view the latest art exhibition in the vast gallery, browse the art bookshop and then have lunch in the designer restaurant. Stroll along to Arset Aouzal to shop for homewares at **Mustapha Blaoui** (p117) and **V. Barkowski** (p117).

Finish your Marrakesh adventure with an evening of medina rooftop drinking at swanky **El Fenn** (p77) or popular **Café Arabe** (p77). Or head to the Ville Nouvelle for aperitifs at the **Pétanque Social Club** (p137) followed by dinner at **Farmers** (p137).

Café Arabe (p77)



ELAN FLEISCHER/IMAGE PROFESSIONALS GMBH/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



A City Day Trip

Book a day trip to **Agafay** (p140; pictured), the stony desert less than an hour's drive from the city. Here you can ride a camel and zoom along desert tracks on a quad bike, dune buggy or monster Jeep. Have lunch at one of the glamorous tented camps followed by a swim in the pool and a massage.

Stay on for the evening to enjoy a glorious sunset over the lunar landscape with a backdrop of snow-covered High Atlas Mountains, followed by dinner and a fun show of musicians and entertainers. Do a spot of stargazing before returning to the city.



On a Rainy Day

Take a cooking class at **Cafe Clock** (p104) to learn how to make a three-course meal Moroccan-style (pictured). Once you've cooked, enjoy the fruits of your labour.

Book in for the half-day wellness retreat at **Dar Anis Yoga Studio** (p114), including a yoga class, a relaxing one-hour massage and a healthy lunch.

A full morning at **Fonoun Zawya Arts & Crafts Cultural Center** (p114) will keep you out of the rain while you create a *zellige* tile, craft a piece of metal jewellery or make a leather purse.

It's the perfect time to splurge on a hammam and massage at **La Mamounia Spa** (p56).



Get Prepared

BOOK AHEAD

Three months before

Book riad accommodation; particularly for high season (October–December, March–May). Many riads have only four to six rooms.

One month before

Organise activities such as cooking classes; book tickets online for **Jardin Majorelle** (p122) and **Yves Saint Laurent Museum Marrakech** (p127).

One week before

Check the weather. Marrakesh gets colder than you might think in winter, and fiercely hot in summer.

Manners Matter

- Dress conservatively: cover shoulders and knees (men and women). If you wear form-fitting leggings, cover them with a long top. There's no need for women to cover their hair.
- Always say hello before asking for something.
- Don't drink alcohol in the street.
- If you're bringing food to eat on a train or bus journey, buy a bit extra so you can offer some to your fellow passengers.
- Avoid eating and drinking in public during Ramadan.

Drinking in Marrakesh

Most medina cafes and restaurants don't serve alcohol, but you will find it in some that cater mostly to tourists. In the Ville Nouvelle, many restaurants do serve alcohol and there are a few bars. But drinking is kept discreet – you

can't drink outside at pavement cafes unless they're screened from the road. Usually, it's Moroccan wines and beers that are on offer.

Things to Know

Snacks Streetside snacking is a way of life in Marrakesh, so don't be afraid to jump in. Busy souq workers with no time for a long lazy lunch head to a *snak* (street stall) to feast on peppery *merguez* (spicy sausage), *teyhan* (stuffed spleen) and *brochettes* (kebabs). Hot spots in the medina (besides Djemaa El Fna) include just south of Place Ben Youssef in the souqs, Rue de la Kasbah and the western end of Rue Bab Doukkala.

Small change Keep a ready supply of Dh5 and Dh10 coins and Dh20 notes at the ready for tips, bottles of water or cab fares. No taxi driver wants to be confronted with a Dh200 note, especially first thing in the morning.

TIPPING

Tipping is an integral part of Moroccan life; almost any service can warrant a few dirham. The rule is, if someone helps you, then they would appreciate a tip.

Dh2**Cafes**

If you just have a drink.

10%**Restaurants
and bars**

For good service.

Dh10–20**Taxis**

For help with luggage in a *grand* (not expected in a *petit*).

Dh50**Hotel staff**

Per night in the box in reception.

DAILY BUDGET**BUDGET: Less than Dh800**

- Budget double room: **Dh750**
- Cheap museum entrance fees: **Dh50**
- Tajine at a cafe: **Dh100–160**
- Evening entertainment at Djemaa El Fna: **free, plus tips**

MIDRANGE: Dh800–2000

- Riad double room: **Dh900–1500**
- Three-course lunch: **Dh250**
- Glass of wine: **Dh85–110**
- Half-day cycling tour: **Dh350**

TOP END: More than Dh2000

- Double room in a boutique riad: **from Dh2250**
- Dinner in a smart restaurant: **Dh450–650**
- Cocktail at a bar: **Dh150–250**
- Private hammam soak and scrub: **from Dh330**

**Currency**

Moroccan Dirham

**Language**

Moroccan Arabic (Darija); Tamazight; French

**Time Zone**

GMT/UTC plus one hour

BANGKOK CLICK STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

TIP

There's a favourite trick in Marrakesh where young men riding pillion on motorbikes whizz through the medina and grab handbags. Wear your bag across your body and walk with it against the wall.



When To Go

Any time is a good time to visit Marrakesh, with the possible exception of July and August, when temperatures soar to 50°C or more.

End-of-year holidays are peak season, when many riads and hotels ask for a minimum of three to five nights' stay. It might be chilly, but it's warmer than Europe and skies are usually blue. Easter and All Saints (end October) are also peak times, when European schools are on holiday. Spring (March–May) and autumn (September–October) are busy, and the weather is perfect. The summer months of July to August have extreme temperatures and you'll need to stay hydrated and out of the sun.

Big City Events

January: Run from Djemaa El Fna to the Palmeraie and back in the **Marrakesh Marathon** (marathon-marrakech.com) each January.

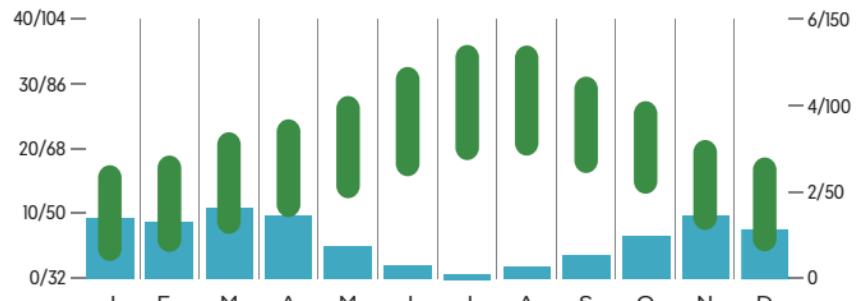
February: The **Marrakech International Storytelling Festival** (worldstorytellingcafe.com) brings almost a hundred storytellers to the city every February. Events take place all over the medina, including the World Storytelling Café, Dar Bellarj, Cafe Clock and Riad Star.

July: The only thing hotter than Marrakesh in July is the free-form **National Festival of Popular Art**. Amazigh musicians, dancers and street performers from around the country pour into Marrakesh to thrill the masses.

November: Marrakesh's long-running **International Film Festival** (marrakech-festival.com) takes place every November. It gathers national and international filmmakers, actors and directors for special screenings and workshops at venues across the city, including

Marrakesh Weather

Temperature °C/°F





International Film Festival

the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech. During the weeklong festival, film projections are beamed onto Djemaa El Fna.

Ramadan & Eid

Visiting Morocco during the month of **Ramadan** is a wonderful opportunity to gain a glimpse into local life, and to try the delicious fare on offer for *ftour* (breakfast) served at sunset. Ramadan dates change each year according to the Islamic calendar.

Moroccans fast from sunrise to sunset. While non-Muslims need not fast, avoid eating and drinking

on the street. Banks and post offices change their hours, time reverts to GMT/UTC and medina shops only get going around 11am. Restaurants aimed at tourists remain open all day and breakfast at your accommodation is served as normal.

Eid El Fitr is a one- or two-day holiday celebrating the end of Ramadan. **Eid El Adha** is a five-day holiday held roughly two months after Ramadan, when families slaughter a sheep, most things are closed and public transport is affected.

ACCOMMODATION LOWDOWN

If you visit during the week and out of peak season, you'll find lower prices at all types of accommodation. Bargains can be had during July and August, but make sure you have air-conditioning and a pool to help cope with the heat.

Getting There

Most people arrive at Marrakesh Menara Airport or at Marrakesh Train Station, both in the Ville Nouvelle. There are also good bus connections from all parts of the country.

From the Airport to the City Centre

By Taxi

Order a taxi in advance (*order kech cab*), or go to the yellow and black kiosk outside the airport doors. The cost is Dh87 for a *petit taxi* from the airport to Djemaa El Fna (for up to three people) or Dh107 for a *grand taxi* (for four to six people or extra luggage such as a surfboard).

By Private Transfer

Unless you know exactly where you are going, it's much easier (and only slightly more expensive) to ask your accommodation to send a taxi to meet your flight. This way, the driver will drop you at the medina

entrance nearest your hotel or riad, and staff will come to meet you and help you with your luggage.

By Airport Bus 19

The bus runs a circular route, every 30 minutes, between the airport and central Marrakesh. It departs across the car park opposite the arrivals hall and stops at Arset El Bilk (a one-minute walk to Djemaa El Fna) and then runs along Ave Mohammed V via Bab Nkob (alight for Bab Doukkala) to Gueliz (passing Place du 16 Novembre and the train station) before heading back to the airport.

Other Points of Entry

Bus Stations

Marrakesh has three bus stations. CTM and Supratour buses arrive and depart Marrakesh from their own stations, situated close to each other in the suburb of Gueliz (walking distance from the train station). There's also the *gare routière* (bus station) at Bab Doukkala on the eastern edge of the medina.

Taxis wait outside both the CTM and Supratour stations. Expect to pay Dh20 to Dh50 to Djemaa El Fna.

Marrakesh Train Station

Marrakesh's modern train station is big, organised and convenient. Taxis wait outside. City bus 10 runs to Djemaa El Fna roughly every 20 minutes between 6am and 10pm.



Getting Around

Compact and flat, Marrakesh was made for walking. The medina's skinny maze of souqs and alleys can only be explored on foot. Pavements are cobbled with the odd pothole; wear sturdy shoes. Watch out for speeding motorbikes. Gueliz is laid out like a European city, with pavements for walking, but they can be uneven here, too. Be careful crossing roads, as drivers don't necessarily stop at crossings.

Tuk Tuk

These are small enough to ply medina streets and are particularly good when you get tired or if you think you'll get quite lost. Tuk Tuk Marrakech is a city initiative providing employment for people with disability and some vehicles are electric. Hire one on Djemaa El Fna or WhatsApp Rachida (0641887553) for a pick-up.

Taxi

Getting a taxi in Marrakesh has improved and most drivers use their meter (ask if they don't put it on). Avoid taking taxis from stands that get a lot of tourist business (the airport, train station, major hotels, Jardin Majorelle and virtually all those around the medina gates), as they are not obliged to use their



meters. You can get a better price by flagging a taxi down on the street.

Note that *petits taxis* might take multiple fares at the same time (the meter is programmed to work out who owes what). If you're trying to hail a taxi from the road, you can theoretically flag down any taxi as long as it has fewer than three passengers already inside. The driver



FROM LEFT: JARTEE/SHUTTERSTOCK, MIN JING/SHUTTERSTOCK

NAVIGATION APP

Using Google Maps is the best way to navigate the tiny medina streets.

will ask where you're going, and if it's in the same direction as the other passengers, he should let you jump in. To flag one down, stand on the side of the street with traffic flowing towards your destination. If your party numbers more than three, you must take a *grand taxi*. Journeys within the city cost Dh50, but, again, more if you take one from a taxi rank.

You can only pay taxis, both *petit* and *grand*, in cash. Try to have a reasonable amount of change so you don't present the driver with a Dh200 note.

Bus

The main medina bus stop is on the western side of Arset El Bilk, the garden next to Djemaa El Fna. Services start around 6am and finish between 9.30pm and 10pm, with buses on most routes running every 15 to 20 minutes. Tickets cost Dh4; buy on board using small change.

Calèche

These green horse-drawn carriages congregate alongside Arset El Bilk next to Djemaa El Fna and around

Jardin Majorelle. Bargain hard on the cost: a good rate would be around Dh250 for a 1½-hour tour, but many tourists end up paying double that.

You can dictate the route to an extent, but a typical tour might run from Jardin Majorelle to the Kasbah and Mellah via Djemaa El Fna, and around the ramparts.

Check the condition of the horse before haggling for a ride as some are better cared for than others. Animal welfare charity SPANA (spana.org) works with Marrakesh's *calèche* drivers, monitoring horse welfare and maintaining water troughs along popular carriage routes, but horses need more shade at Arset El Bilk.

Bicycle

This pancake-flat city is good terrain for cyclists, but traffic is a major problem: you'll need to be a confident rider to stomach the medina hubbub. Good-quality bicycles and helmets can be hired from Marrakech Green Wheels (marrakechgreenwheels.com) and Pikala Bikes (p114).

Venturing Outside the City

North & South of the Medina

To visit Sidi Ghanem, the Palmeraie art museums and the Water Museum, talk to your accommodation about hiring

a private driver. Expect to pay Dh600/1000 per half/full day for two to four people. You could also negotiate a similar rate with a *grand taxi* driver.

Agafay

All accommodation and excursion options organise transport to and from Marrakesh.

Outfits such as Dunes & Desert (dunesdesert.com) have packages that include buggy rides and lunch in an Amazigh village over a half or full day.

Arrive in style on a motorbike and sidecar with Insiders Experience (insidersexperience.com), which will take you to visit the small town of Tamesloult on the way to one of the camps for rides and lunch, then back to Marrakesh.

If you prefer two wheels under your own steam, there are desert biking adventures that include Agafay such as Mountain Bike Morocco (mtbmorocco.com) or Marrakech Green Wheels (marrakechgreenwheels.com).

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Driving in Marrakesh is not for the faint-hearted. Drivers rarely stay in lane and don't indicate, and you must contend with taxis that stop in awkward places, crowds, *calèches* and donkey carts.

KEY BUS ROUTES

Bus 1	El Fna–Gueliz–Bab Doukkala
Bus 10	Djemaa El Fna–train station
Bus 11	Bab Doukkala–Djemaa El Fna–Menara Gardens
Bus 12	Bab Doukkala–Jardin Majorelle–Gueliz–Hivernage
Bus 15	Djemaa El Fna–Gueliz–Sidi Ghanem
Bus 16	Djemaa El Fna–Bab Doukkala–Gueliz–northwest suburbs

TAXI RATES FROM DJEMAA EL FNA

 km	Central Gueliz (3km) Dh15
 km	Jardin Majorelle (3.6km) Dh20
 km	Bab El Khemis (4km) Dh25



A Few Surprises

As you might expect in an ancient city full of tiny alleyways, Marrakesh has a few surprises up its sleeve.

Behind the Wooden Door

If you haven't been to Morocco before, you might start to wonder where you're going when you are led down a narrow alleyway with blank walls to your riad. The formidable wooden door studded with large black nails opens and you step inside... Only when you turn the corner is all revealed: a courtyard open to the sky, a floor of *zellige* (mosaic tile), perhaps a central fountain, orange trees, tall cedarwood doors, carved plaster or painted wood. While the decoration will differ, the concept remains the same – nothing of the owner's wealth or family is visible from the street.

When it comes to bedrooms, you won't get a balcony or a view. Rooms are long and narrow because, traditionally, Moroccans slept on banquettes arranged around the walls rather than on Western-style beds. Windows look onto the central courtyard and natural light comes from the open roof. Climb up to the rooftop for views over the medina and across to the High Atlas Mountains. It's up here that you might be served breakfast, or soak up the sun on loungers. Most riads in Marrakesh have a pool, which might be on the roof or in the courtyard.

Once you have seen what lies behind that thick wooden door, you start to wonder what jewels are hiding behind others. If you are not staying in a riad, visit the **Musée de la Musique** (p68) or have tea at **1112 Marrakech** (p91) to discover this local architecture.

Koutoubia Minaret

In an ordinary mosque, the muezzin climbs the stairs inside the minaret to give the call to prayer. But as the **Koutoubia Minaret** (p49) is 77m high, it was built (in 1195) with a ramp on the inside to allow the muezzin to ride a horse to the top. From there, he called the faithful to prayer from each cardinal point. These days, he simply stays on the ground floor and uses a microphone. In 2016, the mosque was fitted with solar panels, solar water heaters and LED lights to make it more energy efficient.

The Rich & Famous in Marrakesh

Film stars, politicians, musicians, artists, sports stars and royalty all seem to relish their time in Marrakesh. The Red City has always drawn the rich and famous, from George Orwell in 1938, who was horrified by the conditions that

Moroccans lived in, to Winston Churchill, who told Franklin D Roosevelt that Marrakesh was the loveliest place in the world. More recently, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex paid an official visit in 2019, the Clintons attended a friend's birthday the same year, and the UK's Queen Camilla made a private visit in 2025.

In the 100 years of its existence, hotel **La Mamounia** (p56) has seen many famous – and infamous – characters through its doors. It was at the pool that Cecil Beaton photographed the Rolling Stones, American decorator Bill Willis accompanied Jackie Kennedy, Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé began their love affair with

Morocco, and Paul McCartney wrote *Mamunia* in 1973. Depicted in *Inventing Anna* (2022), the notorious fraudster Anna Delvey was a less welcome guest.

Museums in the Medina

It's remarkable that within the 11 sq km of the medina, there are as many as 15 museums, some run by the National Foundation of Museums and some private. They range from the grand **Musée de Marrakech** (p90) down to the tiny **Musée du Parfum** (p115). Of note is that they are all housed in gorgeous buildings that are worth visiting in their own right. Some are riads that were built close to the Kasbah, home to the Sultan, so that wealthy, influential



MITO/Shutterstock

Koutoubia Mosque (p49)



MARIJA ALIBI/SHUTTERSTOCK

Stork's nest, Badi Palace (p104)

families could be close to him: for example, Si Saïd, brother of the Grand Vizier who lived at the Palais Bahia, built **Dar Si Saïd** (p54), now the National Museum of Weaving and Carpets. Nearby is Dar Kniber, now the **Musée de l'Art Culinaire Marocain** (p55). In recent years, three new museums have appeared on the scene: jewellery museum **Monde des Arts de la Parure** (p105) in the Kasbah, a recent reconstruction of two riads; the **Musée du Patrimoine Immatériel** (p47) in an art deco building that once housed the national bank; and the **Musée de l'Élégance Marocaine** (p91), which replaced the Orientalist Museum and features 1300 years of Moroccan costumes.

Royal Palace

HRH King Mohammed VI has official palaces in many Moroccan cities. In Marrakesh, it's in the Kasbah (p95), which was originally built by the Almohads after their invasion in the 12th century. The whole Kasbah neighbourhood was a royal one, with the El Yazid Mosque serving the sultan's entourage. While we can't visit Dar El Makhzen (House of Government), we know that the current palace buildings and gardens were constructed in the 18th century. The King and his family use Dar El Makhzen on visits to the city, and also stay in a private part of the nearby Palais Bahia (p98).

Storks in Marrakesh

These large black and white birds build huge, messy nests of sticks on tall structures such as minarets and microwave towers. The birds return to Morocco after wintering in southern Africa and delight Moroccans, who view them as bringing spring and good luck. It's against the law to harm one. In Darija they're called *lak-lak*, echoing the noise they make with their beaks, and in Arabic *bellarj*.

Dar Bellarj (p91), near the Ben Youssef Medersa in Kāat Ben Nahid, is an arts and cultural centre, but once upon a time it was a hospital for sick and injured storks.

The best place to see storks in Marrakesh is at the **Badi Palace** (p104), where they enjoy the view from the tall, red walls. To get up close and personal, head to the rooftop at **Kosybar** (p107) on Place des Ferblantiers and share the sunset with them over a glass of Moroccan gris (rosé).

Movie Posters

Although Morocco has its own successful film industry, Marrakesh has long served as a setting for big-budget Hollywood productions. Step inside the **Musée du Patrimoine Immatériel** (p47) on Djemaa El Fna where there is a room dedicated to films and plays set in or about the city. Posters from the films decorate the walls. Here you can see James Stewart and

Doris Day on a poster advertising Alfred Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), featuring the storytellers of Djemaa El Fna and set in La Mamounia hotel.

Look out for Tom Cruise in *Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation* (2015), Nicole Kidman in *Queen of the Desert* (2015), Tom Hiddlestone in *The Night Manager* (2016), *Sex and the City 2* (2010) and many more.

OFFBEAT MARRAKESH

Hire a bike from **Marrakech Green Wheels** (marrakechgreenwheels.com) and cycle

around the 19km of fortified walls; on the eastern side there's an attractive, landscaped path.

Pick up a bargain at **Souq El Khemis** (p115), a massive flea market in the northernmost part of the medina, best on Thursday and Sunday.

Zoom off on a vintage motorbike and sidecar with **Insiders**

Experience (insidersexperience.com) for a day exploring the Agafay stony desert and riding camels and quads (p140).

Watch the movie on the hydraulic system at **Le Jardin Secret** (p66; youtu.be/7aHtRrWW8JM) showing the provision of water through the *khetтарa* system.

Fill a terracotta pot with meat, preserved lemons and saffron and leave it to cook for hours in the hammam coals like bachelors of old on a **Moroccan Food Adventures** (p54) Artisans Tour.



Explore Marrakesh



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See p58
for eating,
drinking and
shopping
listings



Explore

Djemaa El Fna & Southern Central Souqs

Roll up, roll up: if there's one thing you can't miss in Marrakesh, it's the reeling, free-wheeling circus that is Djemaa El Fna. By day, piercing flutes and drums provide the soundscape, while street vendors peddle incense and spices, fruit-juice stands tout for business, shops display more baskets than you've ever seen and motorbikes zoom round the edges. At night, hordes of hungry revellers come to feast at food stalls and be entertained by musicians and performers. Heading south, the parallel Riad Zitoun streets and surrounding alleyways are crammed with interesting shops.

Getting Around

Walk

Djemaa El Fna is roughly in the centre of the medina and most streets lead here. Anyone can point you in the right direction to the square if you ask (and sometimes if you don't). To get around this neighbourhood, you'll be on foot. The going is flat, but you do have to watch out for motorbikes negotiating their way through tiny streets, and men with carts delivering goods. The pavements are cobbled, so wear sturdy shoes.

Koutoubia Mosque (p49)

SAATON/SHUTTERSTOCK



THE BEST

HISTORIC SQUARE Djemaa El Fna (p42)

MUSEUM Dar Si Saïd (p54)

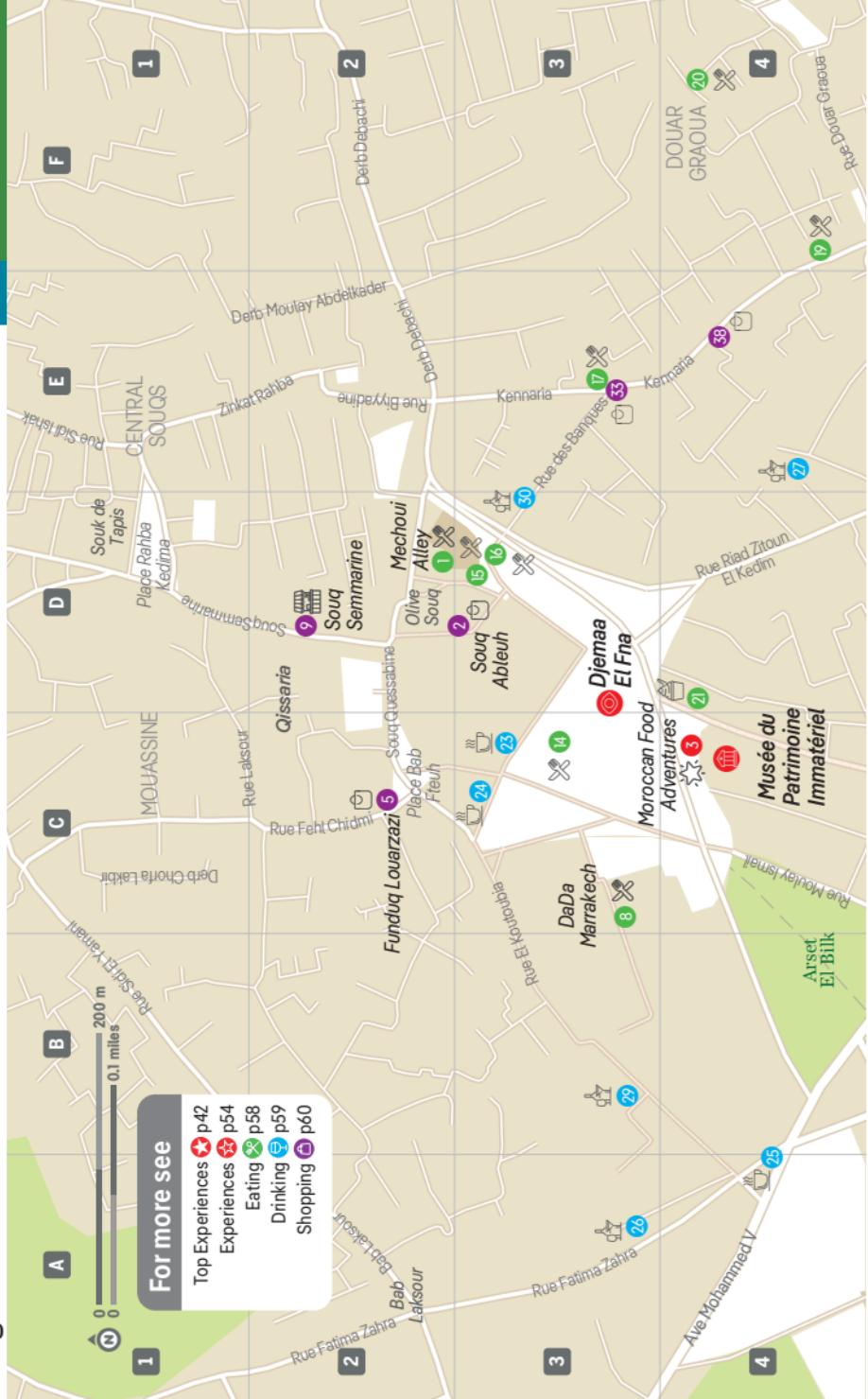
ART GALLERY DaDa Marrakech (p57)

CAFE ROOFTOP Zeitoun Café (p59)

ARCHITECTURAL GEM Koutoubia Mosque (p49)

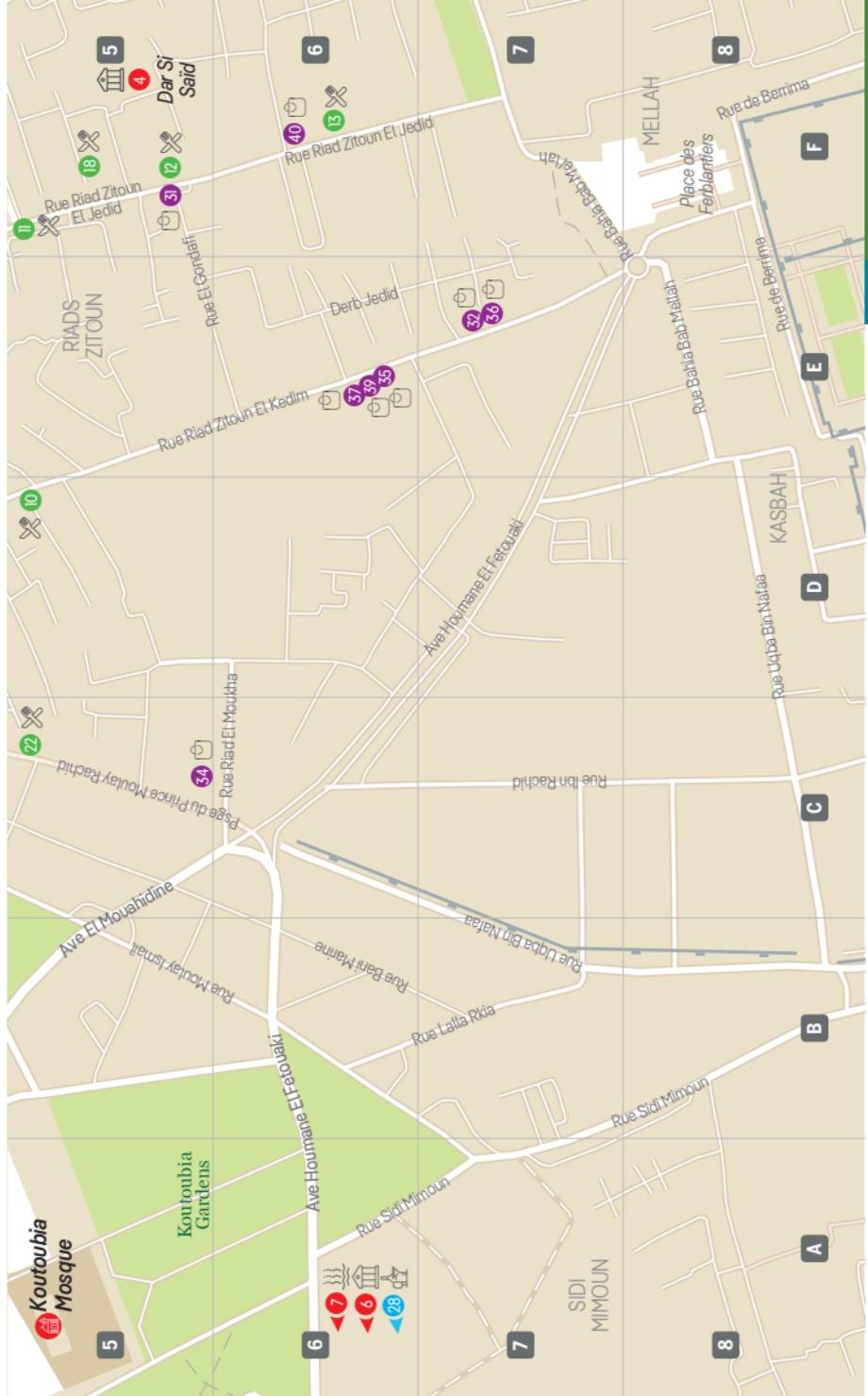
DJEMAA EL FNA & SOUTHERN CENTRAL SOUQS

EXPLORE



For more see

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★ TOP EXPERIENCE

Djemaa El Fna

The very heart of Marrakesh, **Djemaa El Fna** is fizzing with energy from morning to night. By day, it buzzes with souvenir stalls, fruit-juice stands, snake charmers and potion sellers. Come evening, the square turns into an open-air food fair and pulsates to the tune of exciting performers.

MAP P40 D3



PLANNING TIP

Come before midday to avoid crowds of tourists. By night, a food tour might help you navigate the food stands. Climb to cafe rooftops to watch the action from above.

Join the Carnival on Djemaa El Fna

Welcome to the greatest show in town. Everywhere you look in Marrakesh's main square, you'll discover drama in progress. It's been this way for almost a millennium: a hypnotic dance of hoopla, *halqa* (street theatre) and food stalls, set to the tune of gnaoua drums and snake charmers with their piercing flutes.

History

Djemaa El Fna sprang into life in the 11th century, around the time that the city of Marrakesh was founded by the Almoravids. Historians and locals will argue over whether the square got its name from the fact that public executions were likely held here: one translation is 'assembly of the dead'. Another translation is 'mosque of the dead', which could be a nod to the partial collapse of neighbouring Koutoubia Mosque in the 18th century, burying worshippers inside.

For centuries, the square was used as a giant food market, with traders flooding down from the mountains to set up under canvas tents each day. Early photos of this era are displayed in the



SAIKO3P/SHUTTERSTOCK

Musée du Patrimoine Immatériel (p47) on the southern side of the square, where you can see explanations of where each tribe set up their tents, and stories about the characters found on the square. There are more images to be seen at the **Maison de la Photographie** (p87).

Morning Quiet

Stroll Djemaa El Fna as it wakes up to catch the plaza at its least frenetic. At this point, the stage is almost empty. Fruit-juice vendors are first on the scene, along with the snake charmers and their baskets of cobras. Incense and potion sellers and henna-tattoo artists start setting up makeshift stalls under sunshades.



QUICK BREAK

If you feel your energy flagging, head to the terrace of **Grand Balcon du Café Glacier** for a mint tea and a superb vantage point for snapping the action below.



SNAKES & MONKEYS

Be warned: you will see chained monkeys paraded for tourists, and the practices of the snake charmers are ethically questionable. They are not on the square at night.

Nighttime Carnival

Once the food stalls start setting up around 5pm, the excitement begins to mount. At dusk, smoke rises from the grills, and locals and visitors descend on the square for an entertaining night out. It has always been like this – people gather to eat, socialise and be entertained. In the beginning, the square was where people heard the latest news and tales of what was going on in the rest of the country. The food stalls, often handed down from father to son, are arranged in strict rows (though not in numerical order), and everything is scrupulously clean. The food stalls are in the middle of the square surrounded by the fruit-juice vendors, and the entertainers are on the outer edges.

Approach it as the locals do: pick what you'd like to eat in no particular order from various

TUPUNGATO/SHUTTERSTOCK



stalls. You could grab a sandwich to go and wander off to watch your favourite performers and then come back for another course. The emphasis is on good food and a fun night out.

Dinner...

Spicy snail broth, skewered hearts, bubbling tajines, flash-fried fish: the **Djemaa El Fna food stalls** (p58) are a heaving one-stop shop for Moroccan culinary specialities, and they're not to be missed. Despite alarmist warnings, your stomach should be fine, as hygiene requirements are scrupulously upheld. Clean your hands before eating, use bread instead of utensils and stick to filtered water.

Stalls have numbered spots and are set up on a grid. The snail chefs are in a line on the eastern side. For fried fish and calamari, pull up a pew at **Stall 14**. Look for lovely Aicha, who runs **Stall 1** in the southwestern corner, for *brochettes* (kebabs), tajines and *harira* (a cheap, hearty soup made of tomatoes, onions, saffron and coriander with lentils and chickpeas).

After dinner, join locals at the row of copper tea urns on the southern edge of the stalls. The speciality here is warming ginger tea called *khoudenjal* with cinnamon, mace and cardamom, served with a dense, sticky and similarly spicy scoop of cake – a pit stop at **Chez Mohammed, Stall No 71**, is the perfect way to round out your meal.

...And a Show

A proper night out calls for entertainment. The performers on Djemaa El Fna deliver wonder, excitement, spectacle and old-fashioned fun. People throng around and gawp and gaze, showing their appreciation with a tip. Amazigh musicians draw people nostalgic for their mountain villages. Dancers in bright satin outfits spin and leap to rhythmic gnaoua tunes played on the *hajhooj* (three-stringed guitar), punctuated by castanets,



WHEN TO GO

Mid-morning is the best time to peruse the stalls on the square in comfort, avoiding large crowds. Food stalls start operating around sunset and you can expect to spend a couple of hours eating, watching the entertainers, and perhaps taking a break on a cafe rooftop. Weekends are busiest, when more locals enjoy a night out watching a wider variety of performers.



BARTOSZ HADYNIAK/GETTY IMAGES

SUNSET ON THE SQUARE

Cafes encircle Djemaa El Fna and their rooftops make great spots to watch the sunset behind the Koutoubia Mosque, and to take photos of nighttime action on the square. Two of the best are **Argana** (p59) and **L'Adresse** (p60), which both have a lift to the top floor.

their cowrie-shell-encrusted hats weaving round, tassels flying. In another corner, men dressed as belly dancers, with veils and glitzy fabrics tied around their hips, shimmy for their audience. Others try to win a bottle of soda with a fishing pole, or have their palms read.

For centuries, Djemaa El Fna has been a stage for musicians, whispering fortune-tellers, amazing fire eaters and swallowers of boiling water, cartwheeling acrobats and, above all, *hikayat* (storytellers). Today, the last of the storytellers have gone and with them many of the square's traditional performers. There are fears about what is being lost: while Djemaa El Fna has been a protected urban landmark since 1922 and UNESCO-inscribed since 2001 as a place of unique cultural exchange, UNESCO has flagged the square as a space under 'serious threat' from urbanisation and cultural assimilation.

Musée du Patrimoine Immatériel

Set in a gracious art deco building that was once the national bank, and in a prominent position right on Djemaa El Fna, the **Museum of Intangible Heritage** (*adults/students & child under 18 Dh40/10*) is a wonderful addition to the understanding of this vitally important square.

MAP P40 C4

Who's Who on the Square

Throughout the day and night on Djemaa El Fna, you'll come across brightly dressed water-carriers, Amazigh musicians, Gnaoua bands, traditional healers, fortune-tellers, henna tattooists and traditional food vendors. Find out who they are, and why they're there, and how some, like the storytellers, have disappeared, at this excellent museum.

Models of various characters found on the square are dressed in traditional costumes. There are the water-carriers with their distinctive red outfits, large, wide-brimmed hats, leather bags studded with coins and metal mugs – you can still see them today. There's a scribe dressed in blue, kneeling at his desk ready to write a letter for a customer. A Gnaoua musician is wearing his traditional cowrie shells, about to play his castenets.

UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage

The history of the square as a crossroads and a place of commerce and open-air theatre is shown through a wealth of artefacts, documents and film that shows how important the square has always



PLANNING TIP

The museum is open from 10am to 6pm every day except Tuesday. Expect to spend about an hour looking at the exhibits. It's accessible for wheelchair users.



Scan this QR code for full opening hours and prices.



FRANTICOO/SHUTTERSTOCK



ICE-CREAM BREAK

Just to the east of the museum is **Oriental Legend** (p59), the perfect spot to sample ice cream with Moroccan flavours: ras el hanout (a spice blend), *am lou* (argan nut butter) or rose.

been. This was recognised by UNESCO in 2008 when it defined Djemaa El Fna as being a unique concentration of popular Moroccan cultural traditions performed through musical, religious and artistic expressions, all explained in the museum.

Exhibitions

Posters from movies made on or about the square fill the walls of one room. There's James Stewart and Doris Day in Alfred Hitchcock's 1956 *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, Tom Cruise in *Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation* (2015) and plenty more, alongside adverts for Moroccan theatre. Other exhibitions include Moroccan artists and two enormous masterpieces by Orientalist painter Jacques Majorelle, both views of Djemaa El Fna.

Koutoubia Mosque

Five times a day, one voice rises above the din of Djemaa El Fna as the muezzin calls the faithful to prayer from the **Koutoubia Mosque**. The mosque's minaret stands guard over the old city and is Marrakesh's most famous landmark.

MAP P40 A5

The Mosque

Lying 500m southwest of Djemaa El Fna, this is the largest of Marrakesh's mosques and is hugely important to Moroccans; its minaret is symbolic of the city. When it was damaged in the 2023 earthquake, people looked on in horror as the minaret listed slightly to one side. It has since been fully restored.

This was not the first earthquake that the mosque suffered. It is thought to have collapsed during the massive 1755 Lisbon earthquake, killing hundreds of people as it crumbled, possibly leading to the name of Djemaa El Fna, which could be translated as 'mosque of the dead'. On the north-western side of the minaret are the ruins of the original 12th-century **prayer hall**, which can be explored by everyone. To the north of the minaret, the original doorway still stands. On the far wall of the ruins, the remains of the arches that would have held up the ceiling are visible. The stumps on the floor are the hall's columns, and they stay in situ as a memorial.

The small, white-domed building close to the road is the **Koubba of Lalla Zohra**, marking the grave of Fatima Zohra bint al Kush, a mystic who died in the early 17th century.



PLANNING TIP

The mosque is open only to Muslims. Non-Muslims have the best chance of a glimpse inside when the doors are open for prayers on a Friday.



WIRESTOCK CREATORS/SHUTTERSTOCK



QUICK BREAK

Head to old-fashioned **Café El Koutoubia** (p60) across Ave Mohammed V and join the locals for a pot of mint tea on the street terrace. It has grand views of the minaret.

The Landmark Minaret

Completed in 1195, the **minaret** soars 77m and can be seen from many kilometres around. In fact, its use went beyond the spiritual as it also served as a lighthouse and watchtower, and no high-rise buildings above the height of a palm tree can be built around it.

The square sandstone structure, measuring 12.8m on each side, is decorated with pretty multifoil arches, carved arabesques, green and white *zellige* (geometric mosaic tilework) and stepped merlons. Inside the tower is a ramp wide enough for the muezzin to ride a horse to the top, though today he uses a microphone for the call to prayer. It's the prototype for the Giralda in Seville, Spain, and the Hassan Tower in Rabat.

Legends of the Koutoubia

The minaret is topped by a spire with three brass globes in the Moorish style. Once made from gold, local legend tells that the orbs were a gift to the mosque by the wife of Almohad Sultan Yacoub Al Mansour, who melted down her jewellery as punishment after she was spotted eating during Ramadan fasting hours.

Today, the orbs are filled with special mineral salt from the High Atlas Mountains, which includes nitrate and magnesium that prevents the spire from oxidising. The salt is changed once a year, during Ramadan, to maintain the golden glint. In front of the spire, a wooden pole points towards Mecca and is also used to bear flags on religious holidays.

Another legend tells that the pious Almohads had the original mosque razed halfway through construction because the *qibla*, or wall that faces Mecca, wasn't properly aligned with the holy city. Exact dates of construction are not clear.

Koutoubia Gardens

Stretching out behind the Koutoubia Mosque, the palm-tree-dotted green swath of **Koutoubia Gardens** is a favourite spot for strolling, relaxing on park benches and generally taking a quiet break. If you need some downtime after dodging motorbikes amid the medina's narrow alleyways, take the locals' lead and head here for a peaceful meander with great views of the minaret.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In the 19th century, booksellers clustered around the Koutoubia Mosque's base – hence the name, from *kutubiyin* (meaning booksellers in Arabic). Before that time, it was simply called the Almohad Mosque.



PHOTOGENIC MINARET

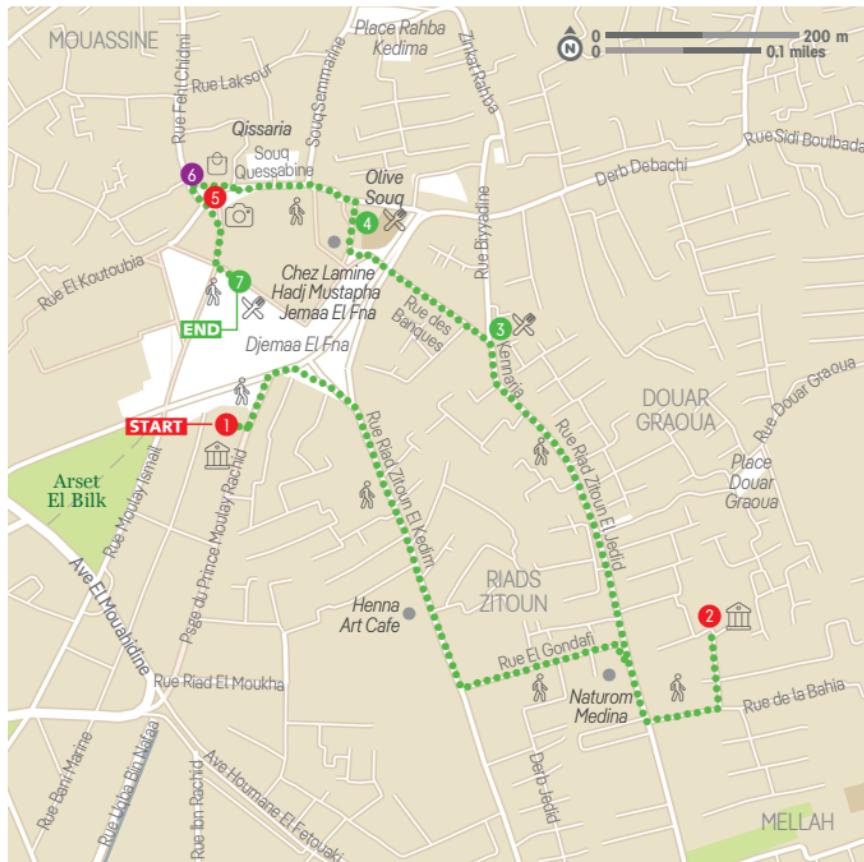
The best spot from which to photograph the Koutoubia's minaret – framed by old stone and date palms – is under the archway to the left of the main entrance.



Walk Djemaa El Fna & Southern Central Souqs

Stroll from the open expanse of Djemaa El Fna, into the narrow streets of Riad Zitoun and back into the fascinating alleyways behind the square, to discover souqs and museums. It will take no more than an hour or two, but you'll want to stop off at some of the museums, shops and restaurants on the way.

START	END	LENGTH
Musée du Patrimoine Immatériel	Argana Café	1.6km; 2 hours



1 Dive into the Souqs

Start at the **Musée du Patrimoine Immatériel** (p47) where you can learn all about the history of the square. Leaving the museum, turn right and walk along the edge of the square. Take the first right into Rue Riad Zitoun El Kedim, meaning Old Olive Garden St. Follow this street full of small shops, passing the Henna Art Cafe, where you could get a henna tattoo.

2 Weaving through the Streets

At Magic Rugs with its wide range of old and new pieces, turn left and follow the street to the T-junction with Rue Riad Zitoun El Jdid (New Olive Garden St). Turn right here and continue, passing the lovely cosmetic shop Naturom, to Rue de la Bahia. Turn left and follow signs to **Dar Si Saïd** (National Museum of Weaving and Carpets; p54).

3 New Olive Garden Street

Retrace your steps to Naturom and continue northwards along Rue Riad Zitoun El Jedid, past the excellent restaurants La Famille and Naranj and the pink facade of boutique Warda La Mouche. At the junction, the essential-oil shop Aromatimiri is on your left, and the restaurants Bakchich and **Cantine des Gazelles** (p59) on the right. Take the left fork and follow Rue des Banques to Café de France on Djemaa El Fna.

4 Mechoui Alley

Continue straight ahead and take the next right at Zeitoun Café into

Derb Semmarine. This is known as Mechoui Alley; **Chez Lamine Hadj Mustapha** (p54) is on the right, famed for its *tanjia* – whole sheep cooked underground over coals (peek down the holes), then carved on large boards. Take the left fork into Souq Ableuh, where you'll find the colourful olive souq with a dozen stands.

5 Fanadiq of Bab Ftouh

Turn left, then right and continue until the glowing lighting shop, Palais de la Menara, where you turn left again. Follow the street full of spice shops and clothing stores to **Bab Ftouh**, a small square with a pharmacy. There are several *fanadiq* (inns) along here.

6 Funduq Louarzazi

Pass through the archway (labelled No 56) and into **Funduq Louarzazi** (p55), one of the few unrestored *fanadiq*. In the *funduq* are shops selling clothing, leather goods, *babouches* (leather slippers) and shoes, pottery and jewellery. Search out Aziz, who stocks museum-quality Amazigh and Touareg jewellery and antiques from southern Morocco and countries further south.

7 Back on Djemaa El Fna

Exit the *funduq* and walk straight ahead down Souq Laksour past rows of more tourist-oriented clothing (get your Moroccan soccer shirt here) and leatherware shops to reach the **Argana Café** (p59) on the northern edge Djemaa El Fna.

EXPERIENCES

Taste Mechoui Alley STREET FOOD

Just before noon, the vendors at this row of **stalls** (MAP: ① P40 D2) start carving up steaming sides of *mechoui* (slow-roasted lamb). Very little English is spoken, but simply point to the best-looking cut of meat, and ask for a *nus* (half) or *rubb* (quarter) kilo. The cook will hack off falling-from-the-bone lamb and hand it to you with fresh-baked bread, cumin and salt. Choose to take away or eat at benches behind the counter, beside the hot hole in the floor where the lamb is cooked.

The alley's southern entrance is most famous for **Chez Lamine Hadj Mustapha** (p58). The speciality here is the paper-sealed crockpots of *tanjia*, Morocco's famed 'bachelor's stew'. Use bread as your utensil to scoop up the butter-soft meat.

Swerve round the corner to tiny **Souq Ableuh** (MAP: ② P40 D3), dedicated to olives. Glistening green olives, black olives, purple olives and olives marinated in harissa – it's basically olive heaven. A dozen stalls specialise in olives, capers, chillies, preserved lemons and harissa.

Try a Food Tour with Moroccan Food Adventures TOUR

MAP: ③ P40 C4

Join the popular guided Evening Street Food Tour from **Moroccan Food Adventures** (moroccanfoodadventures.com; per person €80). Starting at 6pm at the Post Office on Djemaa El Fna, you'll

wend your way through the streets and back alleys of the medina for 3½ hours, coming across places you'd never find on your own, and trying dishes you never thought you would.

Weave Your Way to the Dar Si Saïd Carpet Museum MUSEUM

MAP: ④ P40 F5

Si Saïd, the original owner of this 19th-century medina mansion, a monument to Moroccan *mâalem* (master artisans), was brother to Grand Vizier Bou Ahmed, who lived at Bahia Palace. It is now home to the **Dar Si Saïd** (*National Museum of Weaving and Carpets*; fnm.ma/musees-ouverts/musee-dar-si-said-de-marrakech). Sadly damaged during the 2023 earthquake, the riad was being repaired at the time of writing, and expected to reopen in late 2025/early 2026.

Like all Marrakesh museums, the house itself is worth seeing almost as much as the exhibits. Visitors embark on a journey through the history and social significance of the many different forms of Moroccan carpet-making, from rural weavings to urban looms.

The ground-floor galleries lead out into a peaceful inner courtyard, where a central fountain sits under a wooden gazebo with an intricately painted ceiling. Bordering the courtyard, ornately decorated arched doorways lead into rooms holding collections of Amazigh jewellery, 19th-century armaments

and rural weavings. On the 1st floor is a spectacularly decorated wedding chamber.

Explore Trade Routes from Timbuktu at Musée Tiskiwin

MUSEUM

The **Musée Tiskiwin** (*tiskiwin.wdro.net*) was housed in another of the buildings damaged in the 2023 earthquake – this time too badly to salvage. At the time of writing, a new venue for this remarkable collection was being readied in the same neighbourhood, and was planned to open late 2025 or early 2026.

You'll be able, once again, to travel to Timbuktu and back again via the late Dutch anthropologist Bert Flint's art collection. Each exhibit represents a caravan stop along the Sahara–Marrakesh route, presenting indigenous crafts from Tuareg camel saddles to High Atlas carpets, and offering tantalising glimpses of Marrakesh's trading-post past.

Flint's superb book detailing the collection, *African Berber Culture in North Africa and the Sahel Region*, is available at the Jardin Majorelle bookshop.

View a Treasure Trove of Amazigh Art at Funduq Louarzazi

SHOP

MAP: 5 P40 C2

It's worth exploring the old *fanadiq* north of Djemaa El Fna at Bab Ftouh, such as **Funduq Louarzazi**, where you'll find Abdelaziz El Khanjar in his shop, **Jewellery Aziz** (0661519877). This is the place to come if you're interested in authentic pieces. He has some remarkable Amazigh jewellery heavy with silver, amber beads, turquoise and coral, museum-quality, decorated Tuareg leather bags from Mauritania, silver sugar hammers and intricately carved wooden struts of camel luggage racks (these struts are often sold erroneously as tent pegs), made by desert nomads. After a foraging trip to the Sahara, Aziz and Bert Flint of the Tiskiwin Museum would discuss what he'd been able to find.

Discover Foodie Heaven at Musée de l'Art Culinaire Marocain

MUSEUM

MAP: 6 P40 A6

Housed in a stunning riad – originally owned by another of those wealthy families wanting to



APPROPRIATE MEDINA ATTIRE

In Gueliz, shorts and tank tops are fine, but in the medina, where life remains more traditional, your choice of attire may be perceived as a sign of respect for yourself and Moroccans alike. For both men and women, this means not wearing shorts, sleeveless tops or revealing clothing. If you do, some people will be embarrassed for you and the family that raised you and avoid eye contact. So, if you don't want to miss out on some excellent company – especially among older Moroccans – dress modestly.

live close to the Sultan in his kasbah – the **Musée de l'Art Culinaire Marocain** (*Moroccan Culinary Arts Museum; moroccancam.com*) should be the first stop in Marrakesh for food lovers. The enormous riad has two interior courtyards, one with a marble fountain framed by four olive trees.

Set over three floors, exhibitions are neatly separated into different types of local cuisine, covering everything from soups to pastries and street food. English-language displays bring the history and culture surrounding Morocco's distinguished food heritage to life with exhibits of tableware and linen, which you can also buy in the shop.

Watch demonstrations of cooking techniques by *dadas* (female specialist cooks), or take a class yourself at the well-equipped workstations (*Classic 3-courses Dh700, Premium including recipes and apron Dh1050*). A Jewish cooking class is available on request. There's a tearoom, a restaurant on the rooftop and a shop selling local products. Book tickets and classes online.

Take in the Prestigious 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair

ART

If you're in Marrakesh at the end of January/beginning of February, don't miss the **1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair** (*1-54.com/marrakech*) held at La Mamounia and DaDa Marrakesh, among other venues. Founded in 2013 by Touria

El Glaoui, there are three editions per year: in London, New York and Marrakesh. International galleries specialising in contemporary African art are featured, showcasing curated selections of groundbreaking contemporary pieces by both emerging and established artists. Artists' talks, panel discussions and a special projects programme are also included. The fair's name refers to the 54 countries that constitute the African continent.

An excellent resource for finding out what's happening in the art world in Marrakesh is *1-54.com/marrakech/whats-on*.

Experience the Glamour of La Mamounia

HOTEL

MAP: 7 P40 A6

Celebrities have been flocking to the **La Mamounia** (*mamounia.com*) for a hundred years. Winston Churchill thought it a marvellous place, and Alfred Hitchcock filmed here. Presidents, movie stars, politicians and couturiers visited. The Rolling Stones holidayed here in 1968, and Paul McCartney composed *Mamunia* in 1973. Now synonymous with Marrakesh, this legendary hotel is intrinsic to the city's glamorous history.

Today the gardens, covering 8 hectares, are a tranquil spot for a wander. They are lush and well-cared for, with plenty of birdlife among the palm, olive and orange trees, as well as lots of flowering plants and interesting sculptures.

Even if you don't stay here, you can attend the 1-54 Art Fair, book at the spa, eat at one of the restaurants and drink at the bar, but make sure you're smartly dressed – you won't be allowed in otherwise.

Enjoy Art at DaDa Marrakech

ART GALLERY

MAP: 8 P40 C3

DaDa Marrakech (dadamarrakech.com) is billed as a gathering space for art, food, books and music.

Located on Djemaa El Fna, it has an enormous gallery space and opened just in time for 1-54 in January 2025. It's the brainchild of Kamal Laftimi, who is behind many of Marrakesh's top restaurants, and was designed by Ann Favier. Upstairs is the bar and cantina with a fresh, grill-focused menu. On the ground floor, **Le Grand Palais** (p58) offers top-notch Moroccan traditional cuisine in a highly decorated room. The bookshop is also at ground level and stocks beautiful, coffee-table art books.

Go Shopping at Souq Semmarine

SHOPPING

MAP: 9 P40 D2

Souq Semmarine runs north from Djemaa El Fna, wending its way towards the Ben Youssef *medersa* (school for studying the Quran). It's packed with tiny shops (and crowds of shoppers), chock-full of merchandise spilling onto the street. You won't find fancy concept stores here, and the souvenirs are aimed squarely at tourists. Spend an hour or so browsing for *babouches*, ceramics, caftans, djellaba (traditional hooded garments) and lighting – lanterns and pierced brass lamp shades. Truth be told, much of this merchandise has been made in surrounding neighbourhoods where it can be bought at more reasonable prices if you're prepared to delve deeper into the souqs.

Visit in the early morning to escape the heat, or in the evenings as dusk falls and the lighting shops are prettily illuminated.



JACQUES MAJORELLE AT LA MAMOUNIA

Orientalist painter Jacques Majorelle oversaw the original interior design of La Mamounia, blending two trends: Amazigh craftsmanship and his beloved art deco. He painted the dining room ceiling, with its exposed wooden beams, in a green and yellow lozenge pattern that still graces what is now the Bar Majorelle, and worked on much of the former reception area. He employed painters from Paris and artisans from his home studio at what is now **Jardin Majorelle** (p122). For the first revamp of the hotel in 1947, Majorelle again made major contributions. Today, the hotel's Majorelle Suite features a portrait of the artist.

LISTINGS

Best Places for...

● Budget ●● Midrange ●●● Top End



Eating

Vegetarian Near Djemaa El Fna

Marrakech Henna Art Cafe ●

10 D5

Pop in for a henna tattoo and stay for deliciously simple vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free dishes like a Amazigh omelette, lentil crepes or vegetable couscous. Meat and fish dishes are also available. *marrakechhennaartcafe.com*; 11am-8.30pm

Mandala Society ●●

11 F5

Come for the fabulous brunch menu of Icelandic and Moroccan dishes and the speciality teas. Try the vegan bean burner topped with onions, pickles, tomatoes, garlic, parsley and coriander and served with sweet potato fries. *mandalasociety.co*; 9.30am-10.30pm

La Famille ●●

12 F5

Settle in under the lemon trees for the all-vegetarian, three-course menu fresh from the souq that changes every day. *lafamillemarrakech.com*; noon-4pm

Fine Dining

L'Asiatique at La Mamounia ●●●

see 7 A6

One of three restaurants at La Mamounia (p56), the choice here is between Vietnam, Japan, India and China in exquisite surroundings. Start with a Beetroot Madras cocktail followed by the Peking duck to share. Elegant attire required. *mamounia.com*; 12.30-3pm & 7-11pm

Le Grand Palais ●●●

see 8 C3

Chef Hillali Mbarka, formerly at La Mamounia, is conjuring up traditional Moroccan cuisine on the palatial ground floor at this exciting contemporary art gallery (p57). 0666510899; 9am-11pm



See p40 for map of locations

Traditional Moroccan

Le Douar Medina ●●

13 F6

The rooftop restaurant at the elegant Museum of Culinary Arts (p55) serves authentic Moroccan cuisine. *moroccancam.com*; noon-4pm

Djemaa El Fna Food Stalls ●

14 C3

Tuck into a delicious bowl of hearty *harira* soup at Stall 75, or popular fish and calamari at Stall 14. At Stall 66, they stuff loaves with boiled potato and hard-boiled egg, while at Stall 71, smiley Si Mohammed serves *khoudenjal* (spiced tea) with ginger cake. from 5pm

Chez Lamine Hadj Mustapha ●●

15 D3

The only place with seating in 'Mechoui Alley' (p54), the Hadj serves up lunchtime lamb feasts like whole sheep cooked over coals, and *tanjia* in the evenings, with cumin, salt, bread

and a plate of olives.
@restaurantchezlamine;
noon-11pm

Zeitoun Café ☕

16 D3

This family-friendly restaurant has wonderful views from the roof terrace. Reliable Moroccan dishes include good breakfasts, a camel-meat *tanjia* and a useful children's menu. zeitouncafe.com; 9am-2am

Cantine des Gazelles ☕

17 E3

Pink tables and chairs spill onto the pavement at this little place serving some unusual dishes – try the beef tajine with prunes, apricots and almonds, or the chicken *tfaya* (a classic sweet and savoury dish). lacantinedesgazelles.com; noon-4pm & 7-9.30pm Tue-Sun

Different Flavours

BlackChich ☕

18 F5

Try African dishes such as Black Mamba soup (plantain, sweet potato, coconut milk and cashews), a marinated camel steak in a sour-dough black bun and Yassa chicken, but as Morocco is African too,

there's chicken *rissata* and Amazigh *seffa*. blackchich.com; noon-10pm

Naranj ☕

19 F4

Head straight up to the lovely split-level terrace at this Middle Eastern restaurant and try to choose between falafel and freekeh with lamb and lots more. naranj.ma; 12.30-10.30pm

Pepe Nero ☕

20 F4

Romance abounds here: choose a table by the courtyard pool surrounded by orange trees. Best is the fresh, homemade pasta with imaginative vegetarian options like celeriac ravioli with sage and butter sauce. There's a Moroccan menu too. pepenero-marrakech.com; 7.30-11.30pm Tue-Sun

Pastries & Ice Cream

Oriental Legend ☕

21 D4

Superb organic ice creams in all the usual flavours, plus special Moroccan flavours: *ras el hanout*, *chebakia* (pretzels topped with sesame seeds and coated in honey), *amlou* and rose and a choice of

cone, waffle cone or tub. Also sorbets in delicious mint tea, lemon and ginger, mango and cinnamon. oriental-legend.net; 9am-11pm

Pâtisserie des Princes ☕

22 C5

One of the city's most famous patisseries, with enough petits fours to keep Marrakesh dentists in business. Its ice cream is among the best around and comes in Moroccan flavours such as date, fig and orange. patisserie-desprinces.com; 6am-11pm



Drinking

Cafés with a View

Argana Café

23 C3

The classic Djemaa El Fna cafe overlooking the square is the perfect place to watch the evening unfold, with the rooftop being a good place for taking photos (there's a lift). Choose from a wide menu of Moroccan classics, including good breakfasts. restaurantargana.com; 8am-11pm

L'Adresse**24 C3**

Large, chrome-and-glass cafe overlooking the square, also with a lift to the rooftop. They serve excellent breakfasts, along with other meals. groupe-ladresse.com/restaurants/jamaa-el-fna; 7am-1am

Café El Koutoubia**25 A4**

The street terrace at this charmingly old-fashioned cafe with wrought-iron balustrades has cracking views of the Koutoubia Minaret across the road. It's a favourite hangout for both elderly gentlemen clad in *djellaba* and suited businessmen – plus the occasional Marrakchi hipster – giving it a properly local ambience. 10am-7pm

Cocktail Bars**Kabana****26 A3**

Marrakesh's trendiest rooftop bar with views of Koutoubia Mosque. Vintage furniture, natural materials and palm prints give the terrace a chic boho feel. There's indoor seating beneath a forest of lanterns for rainy days. Good food including sushi, plus cocktails.

kabana-marrakech.com; 11am-2am

La Pergola**27 E4**

An urban oasis with lush planting, the rooftop bar at this riad will serve you its signature cocktails while you enjoy the nightly jazz concert starting at 8pm. Happy hour is 4pm to 6pm. Bar menu available. riad-monceau.com/fr/pergola-rooftop; noon-11pm

Bar Majorelle**28 A6**

This bar at La Mamounia (p56) retains a little of its original 1920s decor (including a superb ceiling painted by Jacques Majorelle) but caters to flashy, monied hotel guests with high drinks prices. Dress to impress. mamounia.com; 6pm-1am Sep-Jun

Les Jardins de la Koutoubia**29 B3**

This large hotel might be in desperate need of a revamp, but the rooftop Sky Bar is a secret haven with a shisha menu. When night falls, move downstairs into the classiest gin joint in the medina, with powerful long drinks. lesjardinsdelakoutoubia.com; 3-11pm

Le Salama Skybar**30 D3**

With 360-degree views from the floor-to-ceiling windows, Middle Eastern beats and trailing foliage hanging from the roof, this is a surprisingly atmospheric place for drinks. Bonus: happy hour (two-for-one) runs virtually all day. lesalamamarrakech.com; 11am-1am

**Shopping****Moroccan Oils & Cosmetics****Naturom****31 F5**

Argan, verbena, fig or orange-blossom beauty products are all 100% certified organic, using pure essences and essential oils from Naturom's own medicinal garden. Staff speak English to guide you through the range, including anti-ageing prickly pear oil. [@naturommarrakech](http://naturommarrakech.com); 9am-8pm

Jad Bain et Beauté**32 E7**

Jad has captured evocative local scents, such as orange blossom, fig, black and green tea, and poured them into

its stylish range of Le Sens de Marrakech bath products, room mists and diffusers, all made in Marrakesh. 9.30am-8.30pm

Aromatimri

33 E3

Aromatimri has been making cosmetics using local plants since 1968. This gorgeous little shop sells 100% natural, organic oils and essential oils, including argan and prickly pear. All the products are beautifully packaged. aromatimri.com/home-en; 9am-7pm

Herboristerie

Firdaous

34 C5

Knowledgeable owners Si Mohammed and Saïda sell good-quality essential oils, hydrolats (flower waters), vegetable oils and creams in this shop on the 1st floor of a small shopping centre. They specialise in Moroccan essential oils. herbo-firdaous.com; 10am-8.30pm Sat-Thu

Homewares

Yannass Concept Store

35 E6

This upmarket concept store's walls are lined with shelves of beautifully

packaged saffron, local jams and essential oils, artfully arranged beside black-and-white KAM Design ceramic teapots, bowls and mugs. [@yannassconceptstore](http://yannassconceptstore); 10am-7pm Tue-Sun

Wafl Design

36 E7

Bold, colourful and tongue in cheek: Wafl's pop art illustrations are part of the art vanguard in Marrakesh that's eschewing traditional Moroccan design tropes. There are kitsch homewares such as cans of Camel's Couscous Soup, and clever illustrations such as a poster reading 'I Survived Medina Motor Bike Racing Championship'. [@wafldesign](http://wafldesign); 10am-8pm

Clothing

Akéwa Tribes

37 E6

Wax-print fabrics imported from Gabon, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Mali make bold contemporary African clothing. The breezy skirts, tailored suits and tees look all the more striking for being displayed against an all-black shop interior. akewa-tribes.com; 10am-8.30pm

Warda La Mouche

38 E4

Those after a touch of Moroccan boho-chic style will love the floaty sundresses with quirky embroidery detail, summery tops with post-hippie flair and sophisticated harem pants, all handmade. [@wardalamouche](http://wardalamouche); 9.30am-8pm

Les Marrisiennes

39 E6

Moroccan embroidery is a signature of this Parisian-designed, Marrakesh-made fashion, but there's nothing traditional about these pieces, which take Moroccan icons such as *babouches* and fez hats as patterns for floaty skirts and loose shirts. [@les.marrisiennes](http://les.marrisiennes); 10.30am-8.30pm

Hanout

40 F6

One of several outlets in Marrakesh, across Morocco and in Europe, this boutique has women's fashion designed by Meriem Nour. There are two collections a year, with a natural affinity with the '70s and rock culture. hanoutboutique.com; 10am-7pm



See p76
for eating,
drinking and
shopping
listings



Explore Mouassine & Central Souqs

The lanes that spool north from Djemaa El Fna sum up the push and pull between the old and the new in Marrakesh. This atmospheric area is home to the city's biggest concentration of souqs and *qissariat* (covered markets). You could spend a whole morning exploring the spice shops around Rahba Kedima. In artisan areas such as Souq Haddadine and the *fanadiq* (inns), metalworkers clang away.

Mouassine has a fresh breed of Mediterranean-inspired rooftop restaurants breathing fresh life into the ancient streets. Dating from the 16th-century Saadian period, this wealthy area had grand homes, and at the centre is the beautifully restored Mouassine mosque.

Getting Around

The best route north from Djemaa El Fna is to take Souq Semmarine up to Place Rahba Kedima and beyond.

Car

There is no car access through the souqs. The most convenient drop-off gateways are Bab Laksour and Dar El Bacha.

Walk

Beyond the gateways you'll be on foot in this neighbourhood. Fortunately, it's flat, but the pavements are cobbled so be sure to have suitable footwear. This is an ancient area and streets are very narrow and get busy. Look out for motorbikes.

Bacha Coffee (p73)

ANDRZEJ LISOWSKI TRAVEL/SHUTTERSTOCK



THE BEST

ARCHITECTURAL WONDER

Dar El Bacha (p69)

HISTORIC SQUARE

Place Rahba Kedim (p72)

HAMMAM

Hammam Mouassine (p73)

MUSEUM

Musée de la Musique (p68)

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Top Experiences ★ p66

Experiences ★ p72

Eating ☕ p76

Drinking ☕ p77

Shopping 🛍 p78

Arset Aouzal

Bacha

Coffee

**Musée des
Confluences
Dar El Bacha**

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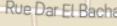
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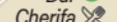
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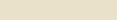
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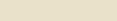
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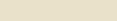
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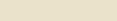
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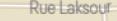
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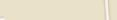
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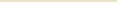
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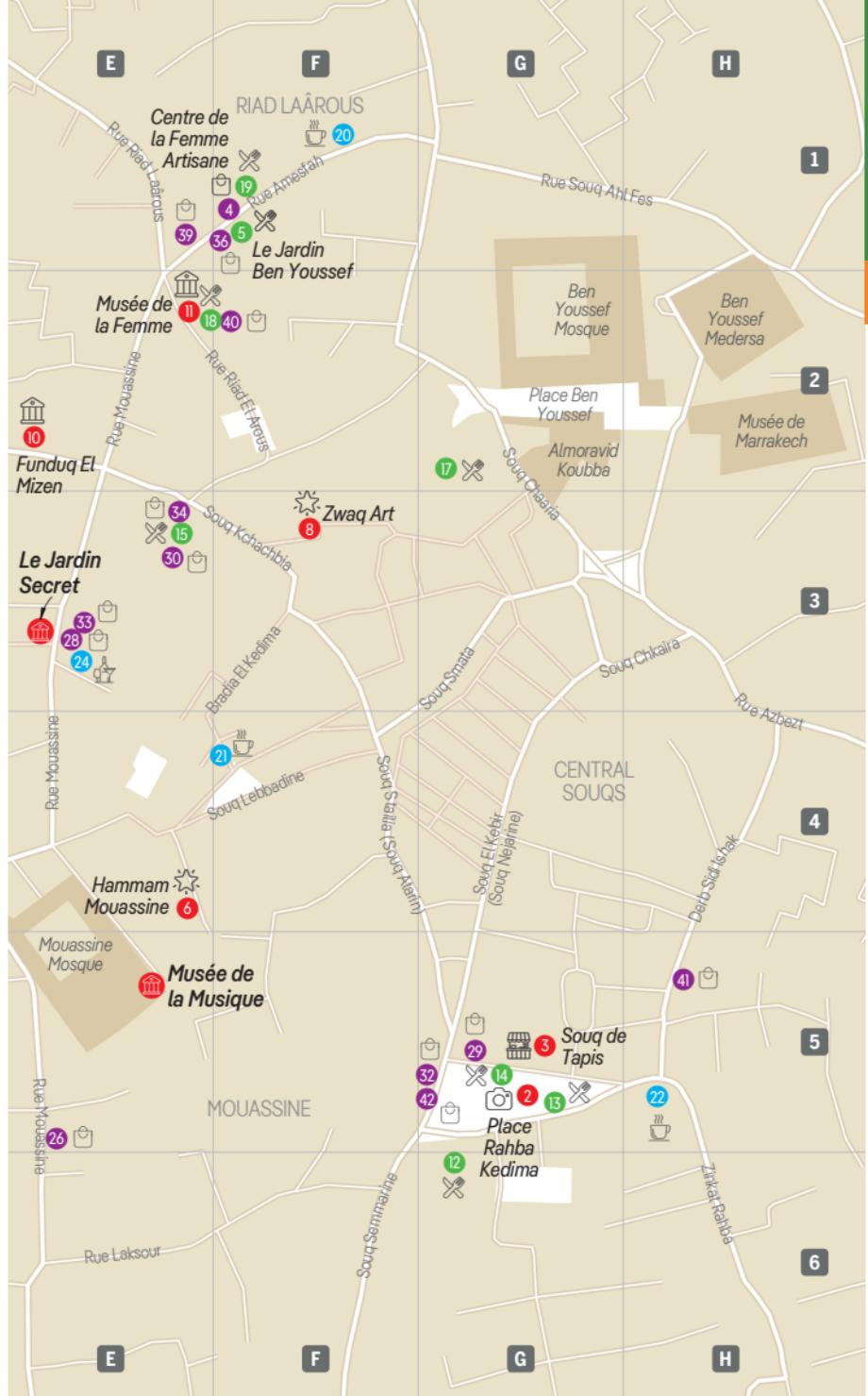
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★ TOP EXPERIENCE

Le Jardin Secret

The foundations of this historic riad are more than 400 years old. Here, though, it's not the building so much as the traditional Islamic garden that is so special. Fed by a restored original *khetтарا* (underground irrigation system), the gardens are a living museum to demonstrate the ancient waterworks.

MAP P64 E3

PLANNING TIP

Plan on an hour or so exploring the garden.

It makes an excellent respite from the bustle of the medina and the water cools things down in summer.



Scan this QR code for full opening hours and to book ahead.



Scan these QR codes for videos detailing the water paths and restoration.

The Riad

One of the most beautiful palaces in the medina, **Le Jardin Secret** dates from Saadian times. It's a surprise to find such a large garden complex in the middle of the busy medina. Two riads and their gardens were joined around the time the palace was constructed in 1850. Wander through the unfurnished riad rooms with well-explained exhibits on the site's history, the importance of water and the role of gardens in Moroccan culture.

The Water

High-tech screens use CGI to expertly show the flow of water around the site, and a fascinating documentary details the restoration process of the complex. The water comes from the High Atlas through an ingenious system of underground drainage channels called *khetтарas*, which is still in use. Only rich families could afford a domestic water supply instead of using communal fountains in the streets, and Le Jardin Secret's water supply was shared with the local mosque. Channels, pools and fountains are intrinsic parts of an Islamic garden.

The Gardens

Then it's time to step outside into the two distinct gardens, a traditional Islamic garden and a smaller exotic garden, with plants from all over the world.



BALATE.DORIN/SHUTTERSTOCK

The **Islamic garden** links the two riad buildings and is laid out along strict geometric lines, with a four-part structure surrounded by walkways tiled in *bejmat* (terracotta bricks) and green *zellige*, and a series of water channels, pools and fountains. This layout, found in Morocco since the 12th century, represents heaven and is considered a sacred space. It certainly is a peaceful spot, full of birdsong, olive and citrus trees, grasses and flowering plants, making it an ideal respite from the busy medina outside.

You can also climb the tower for outstanding views over the medina and the Atlas Mountains. You'll need a special ticket to visit the tower at the time indicated on the ticket, and children must be aged six and up.



TAKE A BREAK

The two cafes, **Café Menzeh** on the rooftop and **Café Sahrij** in the garden, serve the same menu: hot and cold drinks, salads, paninis, *brochettes* (kebabs) and quiche. Café Sahrij is licensed to serve beer.

★ TOP EXPERIENCE

Musée de la Musique

If you'd like to know more about Moroccan classical music, this is the place to come. Concerts are held three evenings a week at the **Music Museum** (*adult/child Dh60/free*), also known as the Musée de Mouassine. It is a gasp-worthy example of the exquisite domestic decoration of the Saadians.

MAP P64 E5



PLANNING TIP
To attend a concert, time your museum visit for late afternoon to coincide with the concert starting time of 7pm.



Scan this QR code to book ahead.

An Amazing Find

While house-hunting in the medina, Parisian Patrick Menac'h stumbled across a historic treasure of great cultural significance. Beneath the layers of white plaster of a modest riad's 1st-floor *douir* (guest apartment) was a jewel of domestic Saadian architecture from the 1560s that he set about restoring.

Imagine the delight of travel-weary guests of old as they entered the main salon with its symphony of colour: verdigris and apricot climb the walls in a vertical garden, while bedrooms are trimmed with sculpted Kufic script framed by azure blue and finished with a fine Pompeian red skirting. You might think the vivid colours on show are the work of the 24-person restoration team, but the decor is, amazingly, original – its vibrancy preserved beneath layers of plaster for centuries. In the side salon, you can view a fascinating short video of some of the restoration methods.

Concerts

The riad's ground-floor rooms hold a small collection of Amazigh artefacts, musical instruments and temporary photography exhibitions, but concerts are held in the intimate upstairs salons: Andalusian music on Mondays, Amazigh on Wednesdays and gnaoua on Fridays. Book online; tickets include entrance to the **Maison de la Photographie** (p87). Climb up to the rooftop, where there's a small cafe.

Musée des Confluences

Dar El Bacha

Not only is **Dar El Bacha** (*fnm.ma; adult/child Dh60/15*) a glorious example of traditional Moroccan architecture, but it's also a fascinating museum. Spend an hour wandering through the salons and courtyard; linger longer if you're tempted by the excellent coffee shop.

MAP P64 A2

The Palace

Built in 1910, Dar El Bacha (the Pasha's House) has been beautifully restored and is one of the medina's finest examples of riad architecture. Wander through the walkways around the central courtyard with its orange trees, flowers and fountains, past round columns covered in *zellige* and topped with carved plaster and cedarwood lintels. The six salons surrounding the garden host exhibits featuring different facets of Moroccan culture, including ceramics, jewellery, brassware and items from the three monotheistic faiths.

In the outbuildings is a traditional hammam, an apartment for palace servants, a library and the private harem reserved for the Pasha's family.

The Pasha

All this sumptuousness gives you a glimpse into the world of fabulously wealthy Moroccan warlord Thami El Glaoui. Pasha of Marrakesh (1912–56), El Glaoui hailed from Kasbah Telouet in the High Atlas Mountains. He was one of the world's richest men and loved the high life, building this magnificent residence as well as Palais Glaoui in Fez. But he collaborated with the French occupiers and, when they left in 1956, his family fell out of favour. It's all brought to life in Gavin Maxwell's *Lords of the Atlas*.



PLANNING TIP

If you plan on a break at busy **Bacha Coffee** (p73), book a table when entering the museum so that it awaits you once you've finished exploring the house.



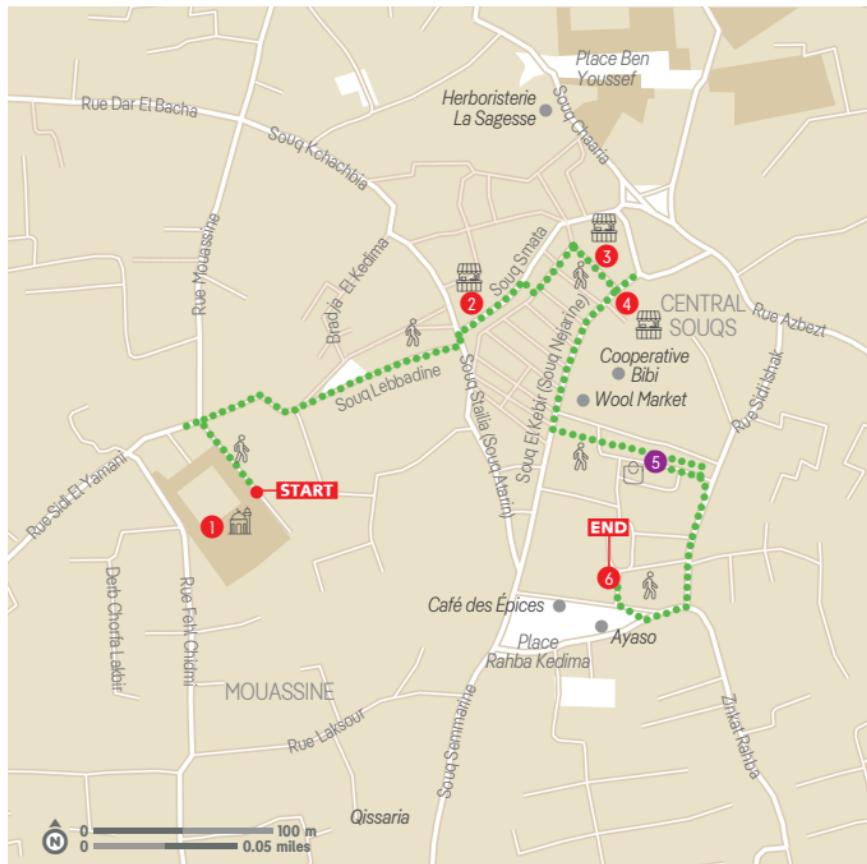
Check the QR code to see a video of the museum and collections.

 WALKING TOUR

Walk Mouassine & Central Souqs

The very core of Marrakesh is a medley of buying, selling, haggling and hawking, but it's not all about carpets, ceramics and twinkly lamps. Here you'll see metalworkers busy at their trade, apothecaries with tiny shops of herbal remedies and Marrakchis shopping at hole-in-the-wall butchers and vegetable carts.

START	END	LENGTH
Mouassine Mosque	Rahba Kedima	1km; 1 hour



1 Colours Ablaze

Beginning at the **Mouassine Mosque**, walk about 50m eastwards past the Hammam Mouassine, along Rue Sidi El Yamani. Follow the curves of this street, bearing right and then left. It's full of souqs, the first being Souq des Teinturiers (dyers), with skeins of dyed wool hanging on bamboo poles to dry.

2 Lanterns & Lampshades

Continue for about 200m, past the Herboristerie des Teinturiers, a herb and spice shop. At the next junction, turn left and then right: this is the start of **Souq El Attarine**, the brass and copper souq. Here you'll see lots of metalwork from chandeliers to birdcages, copper baths and basins, and pierced metal lampshades.

3 Covered Souqs

Walking to the next junction, you'll start seeing shops selling leather goods. This is the start of **Souq Cherratin** and **Souq Smata**, the *qissariat*, or covered souqs. You could explore more of these by taking any of the small streets northwards, the walls covered in colourful *babouches* (slippers). At the junction, turn right and continue straight for about 120m until you reach a three-way crossroad.

4 Clanging Blacksmiths

Turn left here and you're almost immediately in **Souq Chkairia** where a few artisans still make

decorated saddles and bridles used for weddings and *tbourida*, the cavalry charge seen at village *moussem*s (festivals). On the right is **Souq Haddadine**, full of busy workshops where the sound of the metalworkers' hammers provides a staccato background beat. You'll find grimy welders and mechanics here as well as craftspeople making decorative items.

5 Wool & Carpets

Retrace your steps to the three-way junction and turn left, past some clothing and leather shops. Now you're approaching the old wool souq of Souq Souafine, though today it mostly sells souvenirs. However, there is the large **Wool Market** on the left and several rug shops, including Cooperative Bibi that stocks excellent rugs. Turn left into **Souq Souafine**, exploring the streets right and left. At the end, turn right into Rue Sidi Ishak.

6 Spices & Herbs

Follow Rue Sidi Ishak for 100m until you can turn right into Rahba Kedima (p72). On the right is the **Souq de Tapis** (p72), formerly a market for enslaved people, where a rug auction is held after afternoon prayers every day except Friday. Place Rahba Kedima is a pretty square packed with basket stalls, a lot of spice merchants and some smart boutiques. Stop for refreshments at Ayaso (p76) or Café des Épices (p76).

EXPERIENCES

Marvel at the Artistry of Dar Cherifa

ARCHITECTURE

MAP: ① P64 D5

Those Saadians certainly knew how to build the most beautiful houses with comfort and luxury in mind for themselves and to entertain their guests. **Dar Cherifa** (marrakech-riads.com/en/restaurant-dar-cherifa; [@darcherifaofficial](https://www.instagram.com/darcherifaofficial)) is typical of the 17th-century architecture found in this neighbourhood.

It's a *dar*, meaning a traditional house, rather than a riad (which has a garden in the central courtyard) and is typical of the architecture found in this neighbourhood, built with comfort and luxury in mind. It was restored by Abdellatif Aït Ben Abdallah, whose passion for Marrakchi heritage has seen him restore several medina riads, including the **1112 Marrakech** (p91) teahouse.

Today Dar Cherifa is a *café littéraire*, or cultural centre and restaurant. It hosts international and national exhibitions and is a venue for seminars and concerts. Find out what's happening on its Instagram page.

True to the original function of traditional medina houses, it is a haven of peace, providing great relief from the bustling activity of the souqs all around it. The rooftop is a perfect spot for afternoon tea. The courtyard restaurant serves traditional Moroccan cuisine combining Amazigh, Arab-Andalusian and Jewish fare.

Browse at Rahba Kedima MARKET

Around lively, triangle-shaped

Place Rahba Kedima (MAP: ②

P64 G5), which is also known as Place des Épices in French, or Spices Square, you'll naturally find several *herboristeries* or spice shops. Moroccans use their local spice stall as a one-stop shop for natural remedies to cure ailments and to pep up their cooking. Some classy local designers have set up shop too.

Two cafes overlooking the square are perfect for taking photos of the action. **Café des Épices** (p76) is a good option for tea or juice, while **Ayaso** (p76) serves healthy organic food. In the centre of the buzzing square are stalls selling baskets and hats. On the north side is **Souq de Tapis** (MAP: ③ P64 G5), the Carpet Souq that was once the market for selling enslaved people. Try to catch the daily (except Friday) wholesale carpet auction held after the mid-afternoon prayer, around 4pm or 5pm.

Shop for Women's Crafts at Centre de la Femme Artisane

ARTISANS

Several women's craft cooperatives have come together here in the **Centre de la Femme Artisane**

(MAP: ④ P64 F1), a former school that's an excellent showcase for their wares. Follow the leafy path into the complex where all the



HOW TO CHOOSE A HAMMAM

Original **public bathhouses**, mostly with separate times for men and women, are the cheapest option. Take your own exfoliating glove, olive soap, towel and spare underwear, and hire an assistant if you want to pay a bit more. Some cater for tourists and supply everything. Some **riads** have their own hammams, often just big enough for a couple. They provide massages too. You'll need to book in advance. **Luxury hotels** usually have a full spa with a hammam and provide all the beauty treatments you'd expect, such as various types of massages, facials and waxing. Book in advance.

crafts are represented in different showrooms: browse djellaba (traditional hooded garments) and other clothing, rugs, baskets and lampshades, jewellery, leatherware and ceramics. Prices are very reasonable, but fixed.

When you've stocked up on souvenirs, you don't have to go far for sustenance. In the plant-filled courtyard is **Le Jardin Ben Youssef** (MAP: 5 P64 FI; 0661550425), a restaurant serving Moroccan dishes and fast foods.

Get Squeaky Clean at Hammam Mouassine HAMMAM

MAP: 6 P64 E4

This is a proper public hammam that also caters for travellers looking for an authentic experience. In business since 1562 and beautifully restored, **Hammam Mouassine** (hammammouassine.ma) has charming and professional staff who will wash you and then scrub you down (known as a *gommage*) with Morocco's famed *kessa* glove until you're super clean (*Dh170*).

This is one of the few public hammams with English-speaking reception staff, who will furnish you with a bag for your belongings and a disposable mitt for your hammam. Men enter the hammam through the marked archway on the western side. The women's entrance is through the signposted alleyway, Derb El Hammam, on the east side (the same street as Musée de la Musique).

Choose from a traditional hammam (*Dh170*) or a relaxing hammam (*Dh220*), and massages with organic argan oil (30/40/60 min *Dh170/220/270*) or with essential oils (30/40/60 min *Dh120/170/220*).

Book on the website or by WhatsApp.

Indulge your Coffee Habit at Bacha Coffee COFFEE SHOP

MAP: 7 P64 A2

Bringing coffee connoisseurship back to Marrakesh, the sumptuous **Bacha Coffee** (bachacoffee.com) inside the Musée des Confluences

Dar El Bacha (p69) oozes elegance. You can't help but be charmed by the black-and-white chequered floor, trellis decoration, potted palms and staff in red fezzes. A choice of 200 pure Arabica coffee brews is served in a generous pot with chantilly cream, rock sugar and a cracked vanilla bean that comes in a grinder. Indulge in a gourmet breakfast, lunch or afternoon tea.

If you're combining a visit to the museum with busy Bacha Coffee, book at the restaurant as soon as you enter the museum, so you can be sure of a table after you've explored the exhibits.

Make Your Own Souvenir at Zwaq Art

ARTISAN COURSE

MAP: 8 P64 F3

If you look in awe at the traditional painted wood in Dar El Bacha or Palais Bahia, a technique known as *zouak*, here's your chance to try it yourself.

For a delightful morning round a communal work bench, head to the handsomely restored Funduq Moulay Boubkar in Souq Jeld, an old leather souq. Here Abdelhaq Doulaki at **Zwaq Art** (@zwaq_art; 0681003499) will show you how to paint a tray, tile, mirror frame or hand of Fatima using stencils. Once you're done, it's then varnished for durability, and you pick it up later in the day.

This is just one of several artisanal courses on offer at Zwaq Art: you can try your hand at crafting a leather wallet or make a *zellige* tile. Courses last from 2½ hours and cost from Dh320, with aprons provided. Book on Instagram.

Peek at Ancient Caravanserais

ARCHITECTURE

Two interesting *fanadiq* can be found together along Rue Dar El Bacha. **Funduq El Amri** (MAP: 9 P64 D2) is a well-preserved *funduq* that would have once been



THE MAKING OF MARRAKESH

The Amazigh Sanhaja tribe founded the Almoravid dynasty in the 11th century and swept through the south of Morocco. They pitched their campsite on a desolate swath of land that would become Marrakesh. Leader Youssef ben Tachfine recognised its strategic potential, and built ramparts around the encampment in 1062 CE, and established the city's *khetтарا* (underground irrigation canals) and signature pink mudbrick architecture. Ben Tachfine launched successful military campaigns securing Almoravid control of Andalucía and Marrakesh became the operational centre of an empire that stretched right up to Barcelona's city limits.



CARAVANSERAI LODGINGS

Fanadiq (inns once used by caravans – the singular is *funduq*) once dotted the important stopover towns on caravan routes across the Sahara to Morocco.

Since medieval times, these creative courtyard complexes provided ground-floor stables and workshops, and rented lockable rooms for desert traders and travelling merchants upstairs. From this flux of artisans and adventurers emerged the inventive culture of modern-day Marrakesh. As trading communities became more stable and affluent, though, most *fanadiq* were gradually replaced with private homes and storehouses. Some 140 *fanadiq* remain in the medina, most of them now restored and housing artisans and shops.

the staging post for medieval merchants selling sugar and tea, but today the courtyard chambers are filled with small shops selling spices, cosmetics and argan oil. It's particularly noteworthy for the red-ochre geometric decoration of diamonds, hexagons and stars that border its internal stone arches.

Some of Marrakesh's *fanadiq* are named after the activities that once took place within, as is the case with **Funduq El Mizen** (MAP: 10 P64 E2) – *mizen* means scales in Arabic, and this is where traders would have come to weigh goods for sale. Today it houses small artisan workshops, but amid the craft products there's still a giant set of rusting metal scales.

Explore the Role of Moroccan Women at Musée de la Femme

MUSEUM

MAP: 11 P64 E2

Spread over three floors of a traditional house to the north of Le Jardin Secret, Marrakesh's **Musée de la Femme** (*Museum of Women*; [@womensmuseummarrakech](http://womensmuseummarrakech.com); Dh30) is worth poking your nose into for half an hour or so. It was launched in 2018 by a passionate bunch of locals intent on championing women's important role in Moroccan society. The museum completely reinvents itself with a new exhibition every six months, and past themes have included modern female pioneers and tribal fashions and their influence on global design.

LISTINGS

Best Places for...

€ Budget €€ Midrange €€€ Top End



Eating

Trendiest Restaurants

Nomad €€€

12 G6

Nomad's multitiered rooftop is one of the medina's buzziest venues, particularly at night. The small menu adds contemporary twists to North African ingredients and flavours, creating dishes such as Agadir calamari in a cumin-infused anchovy sauce. Vegetarian and vegan dishes are excellent. nomadmarrakech.com; 11am-11pm

Ayaso €€

13 G5

Bright, modern restaurant with a tall terrace overlooking Rahba Kedima. Come by for breakfast *bissara* (fava-bean and garlic soup), or tuck into the freshest organic salads sprinkled with spirulina

and sprouts. Choose Moroccan favourites or global dishes like chicken curry with naan and salad. [@ayaso.ma](http://ayaso.ma); 10am-10pm

Café des Epices €

14 G5

A traveller's institution with a big open front and dark red walls, parked in a prime position on Rahba Kedima. Munch on a sardine ball tajine or a *kefta* (meatball) sandwich and sip a fresh fruit juice. The roof terrace has great views. cafedesepices.ma; 9am-11pm

Terrasse des Epices

€€€

15 E3

A Mediterranean ambience is guaranteed at this hip rooftop, where beautiful people gather in booths for chilled beats and a small menu of Moroccan or global dishes such as sea bass on a saffron risotto. It's licensed. terrassedesepices.com; noon-5pm & 6.30-11.30pm



See p64 for map
of locations

Traditional Moroccan**Ksar Essaoussane**

€€€

16 B6

Follow the porter dressed in red from Rue Sidi El Yamani to find this large, Saadian-era riad over several floors. It's a palace restaurant serving good set menus at three price levels: Dh350/450/550. Alcohol is served. essaoussane.com; 7.30pm-midnight Mon-Sat

Dar Cherifa €€€

see **1** D5

Ring the doorbell to be admitted into this serene 16th-century Saadian riad. The menu has some interesting Moroccan dishes you don't see everywhere, and the jazz-enhanced atmosphere is quite dreamy. marrakech-riads.com/restaurant-dar-cherifa; 10am-11pm Thu-Tue, to 7pm Wed

Ben Youssef Food Stalls €

17 G2

Deep in the labyrinth of *qissariat* are these

stalls serving *brochettes*, tajines, steaming snails and the occasional stewed sheep's head. Pick what looks freshest and tuck in. 11.30am-3.30pm

Modern Flavours

Le Jardin ☀️

18 E2

Lunch beneath a canopy of banana trees, serenaded by songbirds, as tiny tortoises inch across the floor tiles. The menu's modern edge shines through in dishes like Agadir octopus with romesco sauce and fish fillet with preserved lemon sauce. lejardinmarrakech.com; 10am-11pm

Soul Food ☀️

19 F1

Set above the large Different. (p79) concept store, this restaurant has Moroccan-style banquette seating inside, and an expansive roof terrace with great views over the medina. Food is classic Moroccan alongside pizzas and pasta to please everyone. soulfoodmedina.com; 10.30am-11pm



Drinking

Cafes

Atay Cafe

20 F1

There's a striking Mediterranean vibe on this cute cafe's rooftop, which is all rattan shades and white-cane furniture, but the music plants Atay firmly in Africa. Idle over a fresh juice or breakfast, or test the tasty tajines. 0661344246; 10am-10pm

Terrasse des

Teinturiers

21 F4

Climb up the stairs to find a little rooftop oasis high above the haggling din, with colourful skeins of wool hanging from the rooftop pagoda. There's ultra-refreshing mint tea, cold juice and coffee, and food if you're hungry. 0524391252; 10am-9pm

Café Chez Maazouz

22 H5

An easygoing place with decent coffee, great tea and fresh juices that is perfectly placed to catch the shopping-weary. Head upstairs for views over Place Rahba Kedima or plop down in the shady

seating out the front. 0661514211; 10.30am-9pm

Cocktail Bars

El Fenn

23 B6

The best place to see the Koutoubia Mosque's nightly illumination is this achingly cool rooftop bar. Expect the medina's best cocktails and relaxed DJ sets. Plan for an evening sipping martinis under cushion-strewn Amazigh tents. el-fenn.com; 12.30-11pm

Café Arabe

24 E3

Gloat over souq purchases with cocktails on the roof of this bar-restaurant popular with artists, designers and international residents. The rooftop is divided into two sections, one reserved for diners (Italian as well as Moroccan), the other for drinkers. cafearabe.com; 10am-11pm

Bazaar Café

25 C6

Head up to the rooftop for sweeping views out to the Atlas Mountains, and relax with wine or beer and some tapas-style snacks. This intimate cafe-restaurant has a chilled ambience. bazaarcafe.ma; 11am-11pm



Shopping

Homewares

Tamegroute Pottery Stall

26 E5

Recognisable by its vivid green or mustard glazes, Tamegroute pottery comes from southern Morocco. Its design cred is high thanks to its appearance in top-end homeware shops abroad. This stall has a good selection. tamegrouteceramic.com; 10am-9pm

Corinne Bensimon Maison

27 C2

Designer homewares including ceramics and fabrics can be found at this chic boutique. There's a larger branch at Sidi Ghanem, but this is a useful outlet in the medina. corinne_bensimon; 10am-7pm

Bibi Art

28 E3

The owners buy their own wool and work with women in the Atlas Mountains to produce quality carpets. Browse dozens

of different techniques and styles, all beautifully handcrafted using traditional looms and stitching. 0661882906; 9.30am-6.30pm

Soufiane Zarib

29 G5

A tiny branch of this superb carpet and home-ware shop has popped up in Rahba Kedima. It's just big enough for a range of cushions and some beautifully crafted clothes. The main branch is in Rue Riad Laârous (p117). soufiane-zarib.com; 10am-7pm

Oils & Cosmetics

Arganino

30 E3

Gorgeously silky moisturisers and pampering exfoliating scrubs come from an argan farm near Agadir. Get high-quality argan oil, *amlou* (argan-nut butter), candles and natural argan-based hammam soap in artful leather packaging. arganino.ma; 10am-8pm

Assouss Argane

31 D4

This is the Marrakesh branch of a women's organic-certified argan cooperative outside Essaouira. Staff will ply you with free samples

of *amlou* and explain how their ultra-emollient prickly pear oil and gourmet dipping oils are made. assouss.argane; 9am-7pm

L'Art du Bain Savonnerie Artisanale

32 G5

Biodegradable, pure olive-oil soaps carrying the scent of Marrakesh: honey, orange blossom, jasmine, eucalyptus – there's even a chamomile milk version for children – plus scrubs and ghassoul (clay) for the hammam. artdubain.fr; 9.30am-6.30pm

Arts & Crafts

Moroccan Botanist

33 E3

A wonderful tea shop with some exciting flavours: try Gardens of Marrakech with verbena, mint, ginger and licorice. The teas are sold loose or in teabag format, and there are some beautiful gift boxes. themoroccanbotanist.net; 10.30am-1pm & 3-7pm

Souq Cherifia

34 E3

Local designers congregate on the 1st floor of this old *funduq*. Pick up hand-embroidered hessian accessories from Khmissa, snazzy

babouches from Tilila, and top-quality argan oil products from Arganino. *10am-7pm*

Centre de la Femme Artisane

see 4 F1

Large complex of various craft outlets made exclusively by women: clothing, embroidery, leatherware, jewellery, ceramics, weaving and carpets. It's set around a central leafy courtyard containing cafe Le Jardin Ben Youssef (p73). *10am-6pm*

Al Nour

35 C6

Find fabulous neutral household linens, embroidered garments for the whole family and top-quality accessories at this smart cooperative run by local, physically challenged women. *alnour-textiles.com; 9.30am-2pm & 3-7.30pm*

Concept Stores

Different.

36 F1

Multiple premises have been combined to create this giant temple to contemporary Moroccan design. One side is all about quirky jewellery, colour-pop ceramics,

posters and cheeky slogan T-shirts, while the other features jazzy caftans and outrageously embellished jackets. *thendifferentconcept.com; 10am-7pm*

Moul I7anout

37 C2

Clothing, art and *objets* by Morocco's most celebrated photographer Hassan Hajjaj are stocked in this bright and colourful bazaar. The brand is Andy Wahloo, Darija for 'I have nothing' and a play on Andy Warhol. *0610697890; 9am-7.30pm*

Funky Cool Medina

38 D4

This is the place to come if you're looking for one-off fashion. Hand-painted, embroidered and vintage clothing - it's all here (and next door in Funky Fahd). *@funkychahd; 9am-8pm Sat-Thu*

Fashion

Sarah Maj

39 E1

Sarah Maj herself can often be found minding her medina boutique. The Moroccan Italian designer has a contemporary style that mixes Italian materials with Moroccan design - her long shirt-

dresses are particularly lovely. *sarahmaj.shop/en; 10am-2pm & 3-7pm*

Norya Ayron

40 F2

A bijou boutique inside Le Jardin, stocking contemporary caftans in often fabulously loud silk prints. Velvety soft suede and leather bags, kitsch clutches and a select range of jewellery mean you can deck yourself out in complete boho-bling. *norya-ayron.com; 11am-6pm*

Shtatto

41 H5

Shtatto groups some of the trendiest contemporary brands in Marrakesh in one spot. Wind your way up to the rooftop cafe for juice, coffee and tajines. *@shtattomarrakech; 9am-11pm*

Sissi Morocco

42 G5

Old sepia photos of Amazigh tribal women feature on hand-embroidered and printed bolster cushions, tote bags, purses and T-shirts. The results are striking, and the quality is top-notch. *sissimorocco.com; 11am-6pm*



See p92
for eating,
drinking and
shopping
listings



Explore

Kâat Ben Nahid & Bab Debbagh

Along with Mouassine, Kâat Ben Nahid is the heart of the old medina, with scrawls of close-knit alleyways hiding 17th-century riads. It's home to the Musée de Marrakech, the Ben Youssef Mosque and its magnificent *medersa* (Quranic school). The mosque is one of the most important in Marrakesh, and the oldest, completed in 1132. The district's several museums include the Maison de la Photographie, with its old photos of Marrakesh.

Further east, the neighbourhood is simply home to local people going about their lives. Stalls selling clothes sit next to others hawking oranges, butchers' shops and hole-in-the-wall restaurants. At the eastern edge, skins are cured at the Bab Debbagh tanneries.

Getting Around

Walk

Walk east from Dar El Bacha or north through the souqs from Djemaa El Fna in about 10 minutes to reach this area. The first route is safer at night.

Once in the neighbourhood, the going is flat, but, as ever, it's cobbled and you must beware of the pesky motorbikes. Ave Bab Debbagh is wide, but the streets become narrower and busier around the Ben Youssef Mosque.

Taxi

Ask for Place El Moukef for Kâat Ben Nahid, or Bab Debbagh for the tanneries.

Almoravid Koubba (p86)

PARADISE AT RISK/SHUTTERSTOCK



THE BEST

ARCHITECTURAL WONDER
Ben Youssef Medersa (p84)

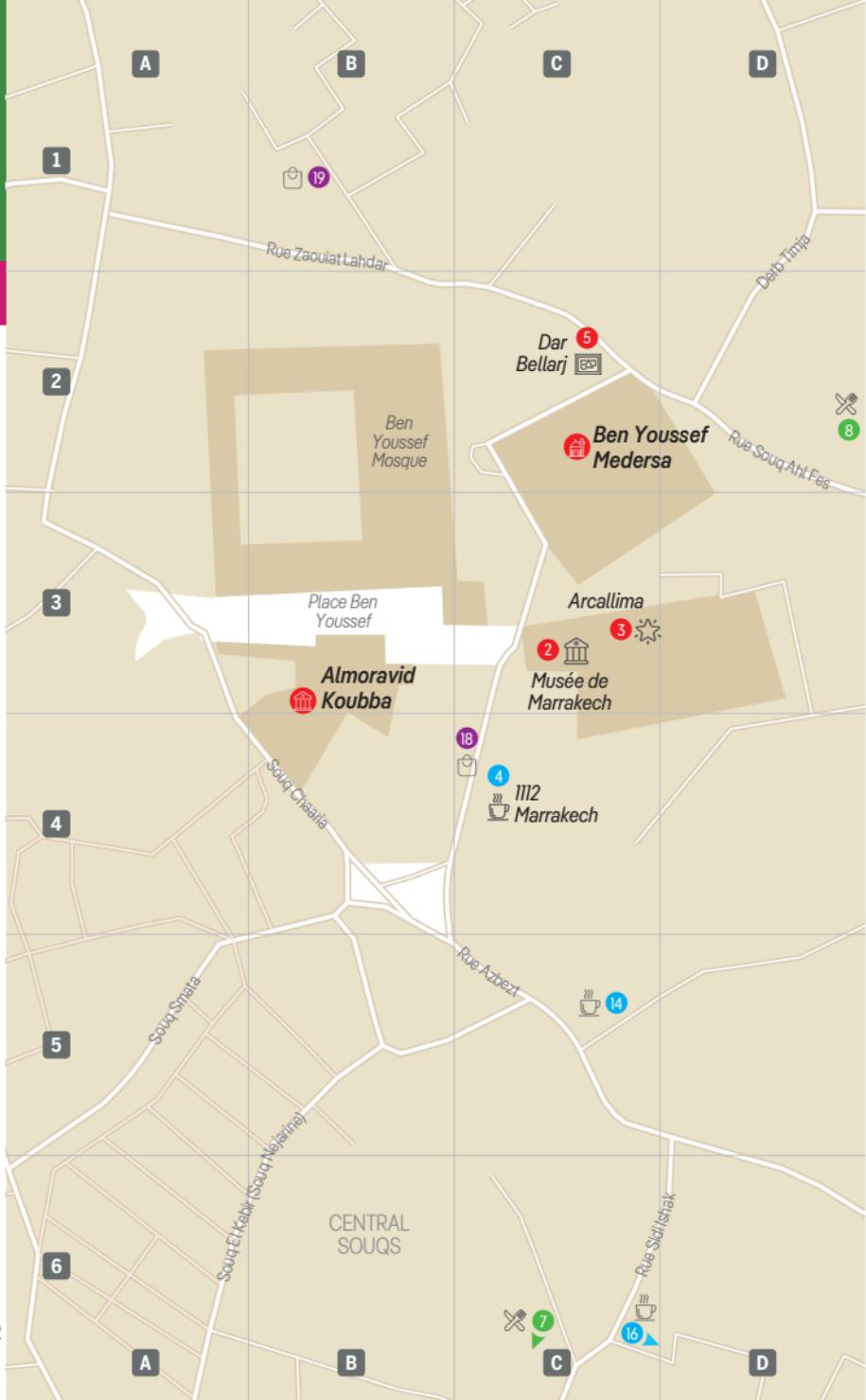
MUSEUM Maison de la Photographie (p87)

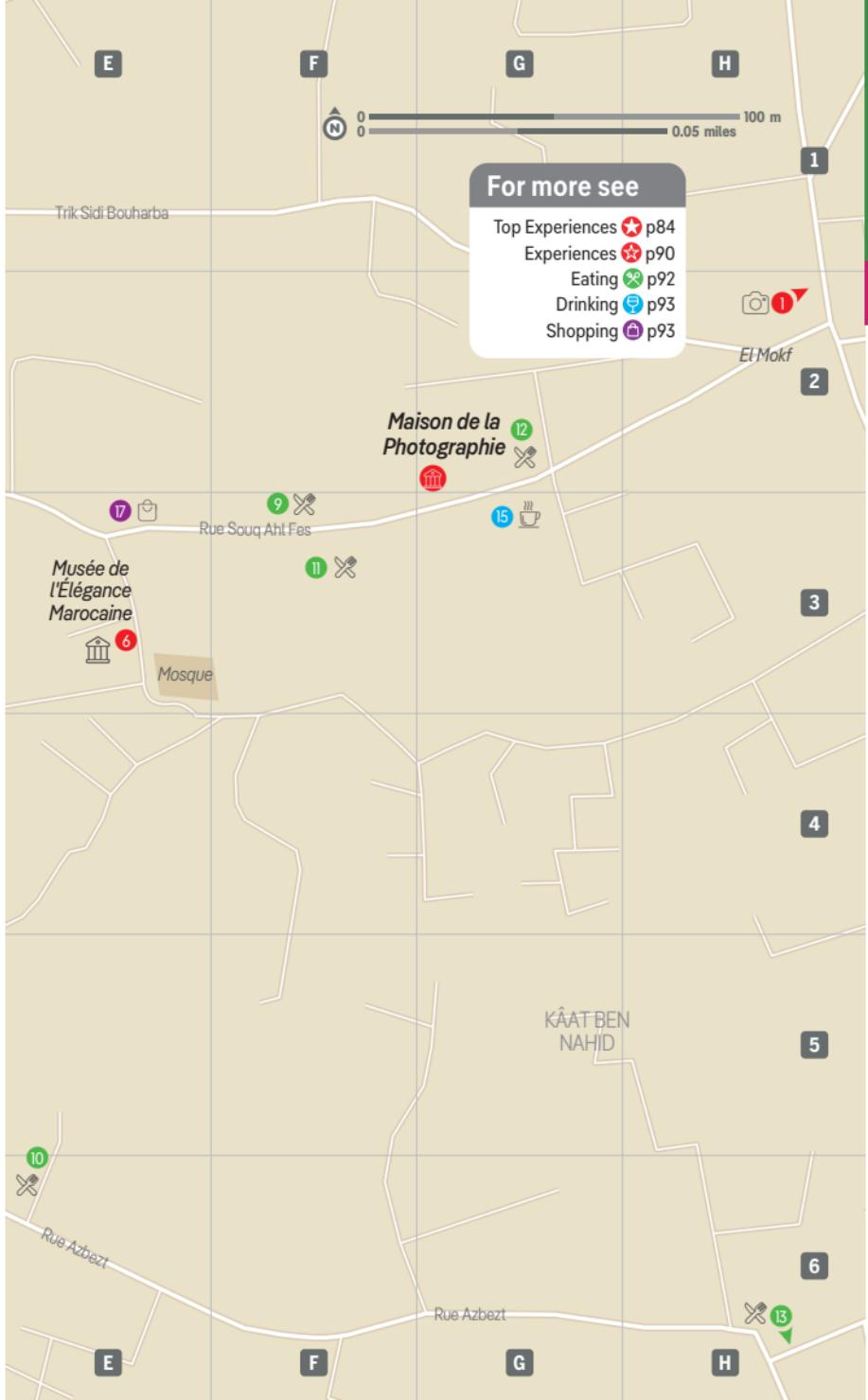
TEAHOUSE 1112 Marrakech (p91)

ROOFTOP RESTAURANT Le Trou au Mur (p92)

KĀĀT BEN NAHID & BAB DEBBAGH

EXPLORE



**For more see**

Top Experiences ★ p84

Experiences ☆ p90

Eating 🍽 p92

Drinking ☕ p93

Shopping 💼 p93

★ TOP EXPERIENCE

Ben Youssef Medersa

'You who enter my door, may your highest hopes be exceeded' reads the inscription over the entryway to the magnificent **Ben Youssef Medersa** (*adult/child under 12 Dh50/10*), and after almost six centuries, the blessing still works its charms on visitors. This former Quranic school is Marrakesh's most important historic monument.

MAP P82 C2



PLANNING TIP

The earlier you visit (it opens at 9am), the quieter the *medersa* will be. Large tour groups descend on it from mid-morning. Expect to spend about an hour here.



Scan this QR code for information about the *medersa* and its restoration.

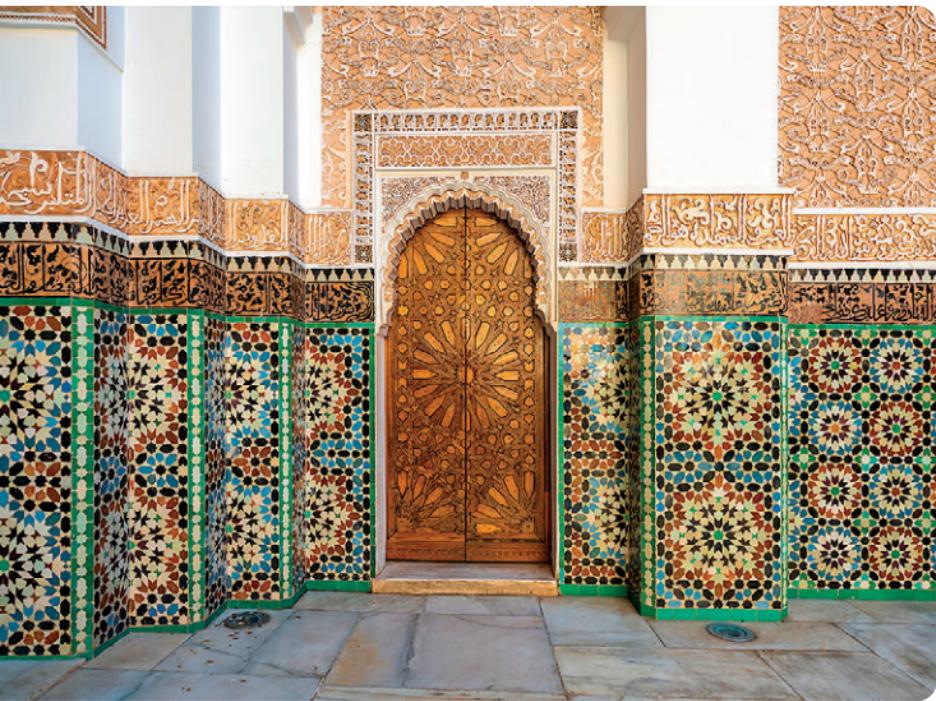
Courtyard

Step from the street under a porch of *muqarnas*, decorative honeycomb-like plaster vaulting, and through massive doors covered in carved bronze. Then, emerging from the relative darkness of the entry hall through *mashrabiya* (latticed) doors, it's difficult to suppress a gasp of astonishment at the serene beauty of the courtyard with its sensational decoration. At 15m x 20m, the expanse is a relief after the tiny streets of the medina outside.

A large pool is set in the marble floor, surrounded by channels that keep the water flowing. The water for this central pool and the hammam is kept moving by pipes at different levels. Don't miss the cutaway in the vestibule wall that shows how the ingenious ancient water system works. The CGI movie at **Le Jardin Secret** (p66) in Mouassine explains this ancient hydraulic system further.

Decoration

In the courtyard, the walls and columns are covered in *zellige* (colourful geometric mosaic tilework), with friezes of calligraphy above, then intricate stucco carving – look out for the Saadian-era pine cones and palm trees carved into the plaster. All of this is topped by carved cedar wood. The *muqarnas* on the domed ceiling in the prayer room opposite the entrance are particularly beautiful, and the mihrab



SAATON/SHUTTERSTOCK

(niche denoting the direction of Mecca) has finely sculpted marble. The *medersa* underwent considerable rehabilitation and renovation from 2017 to 2023.

Students' Lodgings

Students came from all over North Africa to study the Quran, Islamic law, algebra, literature, history and science at this, the most important *medersa* in Morocco, and the largest in the region. With 130 rooms, the *medersa* accommodated up to 800 students in dorms arranged on different levels around the main courtyard and around six smaller courtyards open to the sky to provide light.

The ablution room on the ground floor has four marble columns and a domed ceiling over a central water basin and surrounding latrine rooms (today transformed into modern toilets for visitors).



QUICK BREAK

The entrance courtyard of the adjacent **Musée de Marrakech** (p90) has a charming cafe with plenty of shady seating where you can rest up and enjoy a mint tea.

★ TOP EXPERIENCE

Almoravid Koubba

Climb down the steps to discover the pretty **Almoravid Koubba** (*adult/child Dh100/20*), Marrakesh's oldest building. Recent restoration has revealed it to be a sophisticated 900-year-old ablution complex for an adjacent mosque.

MAP P82 B3

History

The conquerors of the Almoravids, the Almohads, destroyed almost everything their predecessors built in Marrakesh, but somehow overlooked this graceful 12th-century pavilion and *koubba* (dome) across from the Ben Youssef Mosque. It is thought to have been the ablution centre serving the original mosque, known as the Almohad mosque. The remains of a minaret can be seen nearby.

The Koubba subsequently disappeared under the outbuildings of the Ben Youssef Mosque built in the 14th century, and was only excavated in 1952. The whole complex has recently been restored.

PLANNING TIP

Some readers feel the entrance fee is too high, given you'll spend about 15 to 20 minutes here. You can just look at the Koubba from the surrounding railings, but you'd miss the exquisite decoration inside the dome.



Architecture & Decoration

The Koubba's design reveals what Hispano-Moorish architecture owes to the Almoravids: keyhole arches, interlaced arabesques and a domed cupola on a crenellated base, similar to domes found in Córdoba and Toledo.

The dome covers a pool used for ablutions before prayer. Outside the building, *khettaras* (traditional underground irrigation systems) supply latrines and drinking water taps. Inside, the pavilion and dome are richly decorated with floral patterns, calligraphy and exquisite *muqarnas*. The arches around the inner edge are decorated in red and sandstone stars.

Another rectangular building adjacent to the Koubba has three bays containing fountains that likely supplied water to the local population.

Maison de la Photographie

Collectors of vintage Moroccan photography Patrick Menac'h and Hamid Mergani opened the **Maison de la Photographie** (*adult/child Dh60/40*) to show their collections in their original context. The result is a fascinating display of the lifestyles and landscapes that the first intrepid photographers in Morocco captured through their lenses.

MAP P82 G2

Vintage Portraiture

The ground-floor courtyard and rooms fanning off it are usually devoted to portraiture. The subjects are diverse, from tribal tattooed women of the mountains to aristocratic Arab city dwellers from Fez. The stand-out image of the permanent collection is a mesmerising photo of Hamidou Laambre, a sub-Saharan servant, taken in 1885 by Arévalo, a librarian from Tangier.

Morocco's Photography Debut

The ground floor's back salon holds the gallery's oldest photos, showing the debut of photography in Morocco when the first Europeans arrived with cameras and began documenting life here. The exhibit includes images of Tangier taken between 1870 and 1900.

Landscapes & Lifestyles

The 1st-floor chambers host engaging works by Hungarian Nicolas Muller (1940s) and Belgian Charles Henneghien (1960s). Don't miss the 1920s photos of the Saadian Tombs, Ben Youssef Mosque, Djemaa El Fna and Marrakesh's ramparts, with only empty desert stretching beyond.

High Atlas Life

As you climb the stairs to the rooftop terrace, pop into the small room where French photographer Daniel Chicault's High Atlas documentary is played. Filmed in 1956, it's a fascinating view into rural life during that period.



DON'T MISS

The rooftop terrace (p93), one of the highest in the medina, has a cafe providing a welcome break – and splendid views – after your visit to the gallery.

View the autochromes dark room on the terrace floor, displaying the only colour photographs in the gallery.



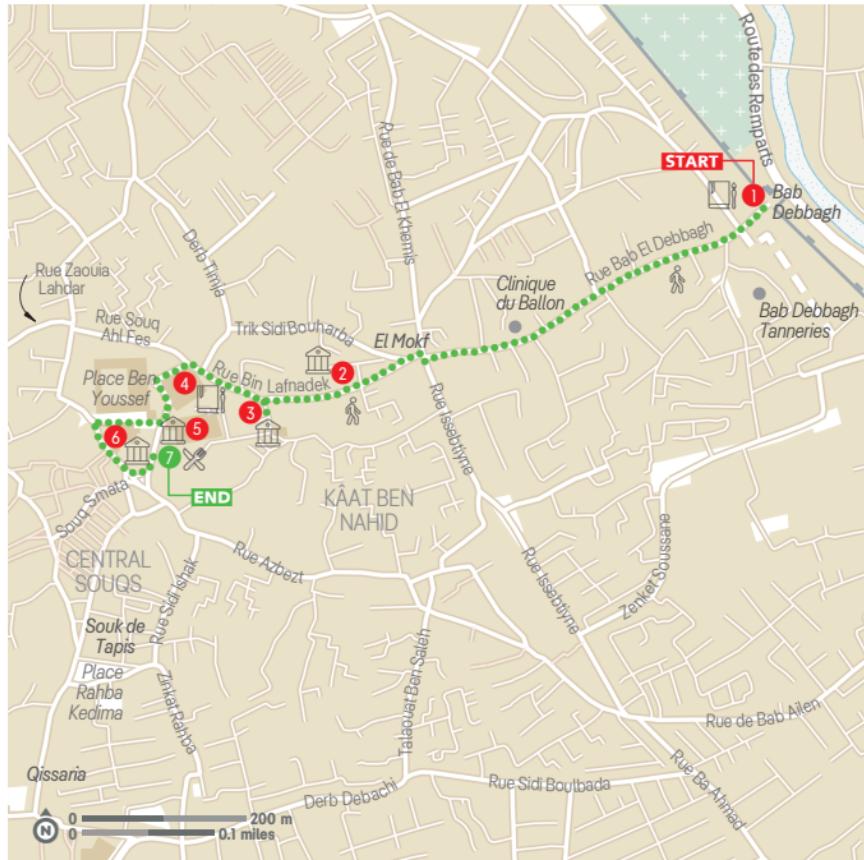
Scan this QR code to see the photo of the month.



Walk Kâat Ben Nahid & Bab Debbagh

Beginning at the handsome Bab Debbagh (gate), visit the tanneries if you wish, then saunter along Ave Bab Debbagh with its scenes of medina life. Visit three museums en route, followed by the marvellous Medersa Ben Youssef and the delightful Almoravid Koubba. You'll have earned a tea tasting at 1112 Marrakech.

START	END	LENGTH
Bab Debbagh	1112 Marrakech	1.1km; 1½ hours



1 Follow Your Nose

Enter the medina through handsome **Bab Debbagh** and immediately you'll see the tanneries on your left. If you feel robust enough to endure the constant haranguing by 'guides' and the smell, go inside to see how the skins are cleaned. It's free to enter. Don't be lured into any shops or the Artisanal Centre. Continue along Ave Debbagh, passing Clinique du Ballon, where soccer and rugby balls are hand-stitched, on your right. There are some smaller tanneries you can poke your nose into along here. You'll see normal medina life going on, with men tending tajines in tiny restaurants, women making *msemen* (fried flat-breads) on griddles, children going to school and people doing their shopping at small vegetable carts and butchers' shops.

2 Old Photographs

After 500m, at Place El Moukef, turn left into Rue Bin Lafnadek and follow the signs to **Maison de la Photographie** (p87). This large riad contains a remarkable photographic memory of Marrakesh. Don't miss the 1957 documentary, *Landscapes and Faces of the High Atlas*, the first ever shot in Morocco in colour.

3 Dressed-Up Dolls

Exiting the Photography Museum, turn left again after 120m into Derb El Khamsi, where you'll immediately see the **Musée de l'Élégance Marocaine** (p91) on your right. Set in a beautiful riad, it features 1300

years of Moroccan costumes, both full-size and on dolls.

4 Awe-Inspiring Architecture

Retrace your steps to Rue Bin Lafnadek, turn left and after 150m, take the left-hand turn into Rue Azbezt, where you'll find yourself at the porch and enormous brass doors of the **Ben Youssef Medersa** (p84). This splendid former Quranic school is Marrakesh's most significant monument.

5 Palace Museum

Exit the Medersa and turn left, follow the street round the corner and the **Musée de Marrakech** (p90) is immediately on your left, housed in the imposing Palais Mnebhi. Notice the Ben Youssef Library on your right (closed to the public).

6 Nine-Hundred-Year-Old Dome

Exit the museum, walk 25m and turn right into Place de la Qissariat Ben Youssef. Take the next left turn and the **Almoravid Koubba** (p86) is on your left. Built in 1117, it's one of the only vestiges of Almoravid architecture left and the dome is sumptuously decorated.

7 Anyone for Tea?

Continue down this street for 90m, following the curve around to the left until you see the riad **1112 Marrakech** (p91) on your left. Walk down the long entrance hall and out into the splendid courtyard garden for some welcome tea. There's a tea museum upstairs.

EXPERIENCES

Watch an Ancient Craft at Bab Debbagh Tanneries

CRAFTS

MAP: ① P82 H2

Men have been up to their knees in lime, pigeon poo and other smelly substances at the **Bab Debbagh Tanneries** (*closed Friday*) since the late 11th century. Skins are brought here to be cured in the vats of chemicals to remove the hair, softened so they can be cut and stitched, and dried in the sun. It's a vast area of vats and smells pretty bad, but it's interesting to see the men at work and a good photo opportunity. Unlike the Chaouara tanneries in Fez, the leather is not dyed here, so the vats are not vibrantly coloured.

You probably won't need more than 15 minutes here. Plan your visit for the morning before the sun makes the smell worse. Be aware that it's free to enter and you don't need a guide, despite what the *faux guides* (unofficial guides) outside tell you.

Soak up the Opulent Musée de Marrakech

MUSEUM

MAP: ② P82 C3

Spend an hour gawping at the decadent salons of the Mnebhi Palace housing the **Musée de Marrakech** (marrakechmuseum.com; adult/child Dh70/20). The central courtyard, with its riot of cedar archways, enormous chandelier, stained-glass windows, intricately painted door panels and, of course, lashings of *zellige*, is the highlight, though don't miss the display of exquisite Fez ceramics in the main room, and the palace hammam. This is one of Marrakesh's oldest museums and is looking dated compared with some others.

The cafe in the entrance courtyard makes a welcome break.

Write Your Name in Arabic at Arcallima

ARTS & CRAFTS

MAP: ③ P82 C3

Located in the Musée de Marrakech, **Arcallima** (arcallima.com; per



SCAM ALERT

The **Centre Artisanal Medina** off Derb Soussane in the vicinity of Bab Debbagh should be avoided. Readers have complained of being lured in and not being allowed to leave until they give a tip or buy something they don't want. Prices are high and the men are aggressive. Others wait outside and demand money for a tour of the tanneries. If you're not sure you'll be able to shake off these men, go in a group or with a registered guide organised through your accommodation. Note that this does not apply to other artisanal centres dotted about the medina.

person for 2-4 people Dh450) offers two- to 2½-hour Arabic calligraphy workshops that will have you writing your name in Arabic in no time. Learn how to use the tools, and practise the techniques of this beautiful script full of arabesques and flourishes that you can see in palaces and monuments carved into plaster, wood and *zellige*. At the end of the course, you get a certificate and a goodie bag with gifts. Book via the website.

Take Tea in Leafy 1112 Marrakech

RESTAURANT

MAP: ④ P82 C4

1112 Marrakech (1112marrakech.com) is a delightful teahouse set in a magnificent riad. The name refers to the year the ceiling in one of the salons was painted – the equivalent of 1700 CE. In the leafy courtyard, taste your way around Morocco with special teas from the 12 regions. Come for Dwaz Atay at 11am served with pastries, or any time for a good brew. Lunch is a tasting menu of unusual dishes from all over the country. The museum upstairs outlines the close relationship of Morocco with Manchester, UK, when it comes to all things tea-related.

See the Exhibitions at Dar Bellarj

CULTURAL CENTRE

MAP: ⑤ P82 C2

Flights of fancy come with the territory at **Dar Bellarj** (darbellarj-fondation.com), a former stork hospital (*bellarj* is Arabic for stork) turned cultural centre and gallery. Each year the non-profit Dar Bellarj Foundation adopts a programme themed around living culture, ranging from film to women's textiles and storytelling. Admission is usually free (there's a charge for some events). Exhibitions are in French and Arabic – check the website to see what's on.

Wonder at the Costumes at the Musée de l'Élégance Marocaine

MUSEUM

MAP: ⑥ P82 E3

Located in a beautiful 17th-century riad, the **Musée de l'Élégance Marocaine** (*Moroccan Elegance Museum*; museumofmoroccanelegance.com; adult/student/child Dh50/30/free) features the collection of the late artist and historian Habiba Hantout, showcasing 13 centuries of Moroccan clothing. There are full-size mannequins in traditional costumes as well as almost 200 dolls dressed in miniature versions, a rooftop cafe, exhibition space for local artists and a concept store.

LISTINGS

Best Places for...

€ Budget €€ Midrange €€€ Top End



Eating

Top-End Restaurants

L'Mida €€

7 C6

Push open the studded door and climb up to the pretty green, white and mustard decor on the 1st floor and rooftop. Excellent modern Moroccan fare includes Amazigh gnocchi or sea bream poke bowl; there's a children's menu too. *lmidamarrakech.com; noon-10.30pm*

Le Trou au Mur €€€

8 D2

This classy contemporary restaurant serves a mix of little-seen Moroccan dishes, fusion food and international crowd pleasers. Choose the art-filled dining room or head to the rooftop for the house speciality of *mechoui* (slow-roasted lamb). *letrouaumur.com; noon-*



See p82 for map of locations

3pm & 6.30pm-midnight
Wed-Mon

Le Foundouk €€€

9 F3

A spidery iron chandelier lit with candles sets the mood for fine dining, with Moroccan and international menus. Portions aren't huge, but great care is taken to present dishes beyond the run-of-the-mill tourist options. Booking online is recommended. *foundouk.com; 7pm-midnight Thu-Tue*

Affordable Options

Naima €€

10 E6

For authentic couscous, squeeze into Naima's tiny canteen for her feast of chicken and vegetable couscous (there's no menu, and little English is spoken). *1-10pm*

World Storytelling

Café €

11 F3

Excellent vegan cafe serving a selection of tapas and mains of stuffed bell peppers or nut-and-seed burgers,

along with juices and smoothies. It's a tiny place over two floors and a roof terrace. Stay to listen to the storytellers. *worldstorytellingcafe.com; noon-8pm*

Dar Tazi €€

12 G2

The restaurant has an old-fashioned, homey appeal, a roof terrace and a dependable menu of Moroccan staples. Its location next to the Maison de la Photographie (p87) makes it a good lunch option. *restaurantdartazi.com; 10.30am-3pm & 6.30-10pm*

Roti d'Or €

13 H6

The theme is Tex-Mex and, while it's not very authentic, it's plenty tasty and makes a change. Menu options like Tex-Mex burgers and falafel wraps all come with fries and olives; the spiced chicken burrito is a bargain. *0675452260; 12.30-5pm & 6.30-8.30pm*

Drinking

Time for Tea

Kafé Merstan

14 C5

Right in the centre of the medina souqs, Merstan's roof terrace is a great place to escape for a fresh juice or a mint or cinnamon tea. Friendly service, good views and comfy shaded seating make this the perfect spot to refresh and recharge. It's also popular for food. kafemerstan.com; noon-10pm

Maison de la Photographie Terrace

15 G3

This panoramic terrace is one of the highest in the medina, and it's a wonderful place to sit back and admire the terracotta rooftops with a fruit juice or mint



tea after visiting the photography gallery (p87) downstairs. *maisondelaphotographie. ma*; 9.30am-7pm

Shtatto

16 C6

Climb up to the rooftop (billed as the highest in the medina) above the designer store for lunchtime tajines, sandwiches, salads, burgers and juices. *booking. shtattomarrakech.com*; 9.30am-11pm



Shopping

Arts & Crafts

Fiber Trip

17 E3

You can watch beautiful quality wool and linen scarves being woven by hand here on a traditional loom. 0642223758; 10am-7pm

La Qoubba Galerie d'Art

18 C4

This smart yet approachable gallery is a showroom for well-regarded contemporary Moroccan artists, the quality is noticeably higher than elsewhere, and artworks come with certificates of authenticity. Gallery manager Mohammed has a wealth of knowledge about the artists and can arrange shipping for large canvases. *qoubbagalerie. com*; 9am-7pm

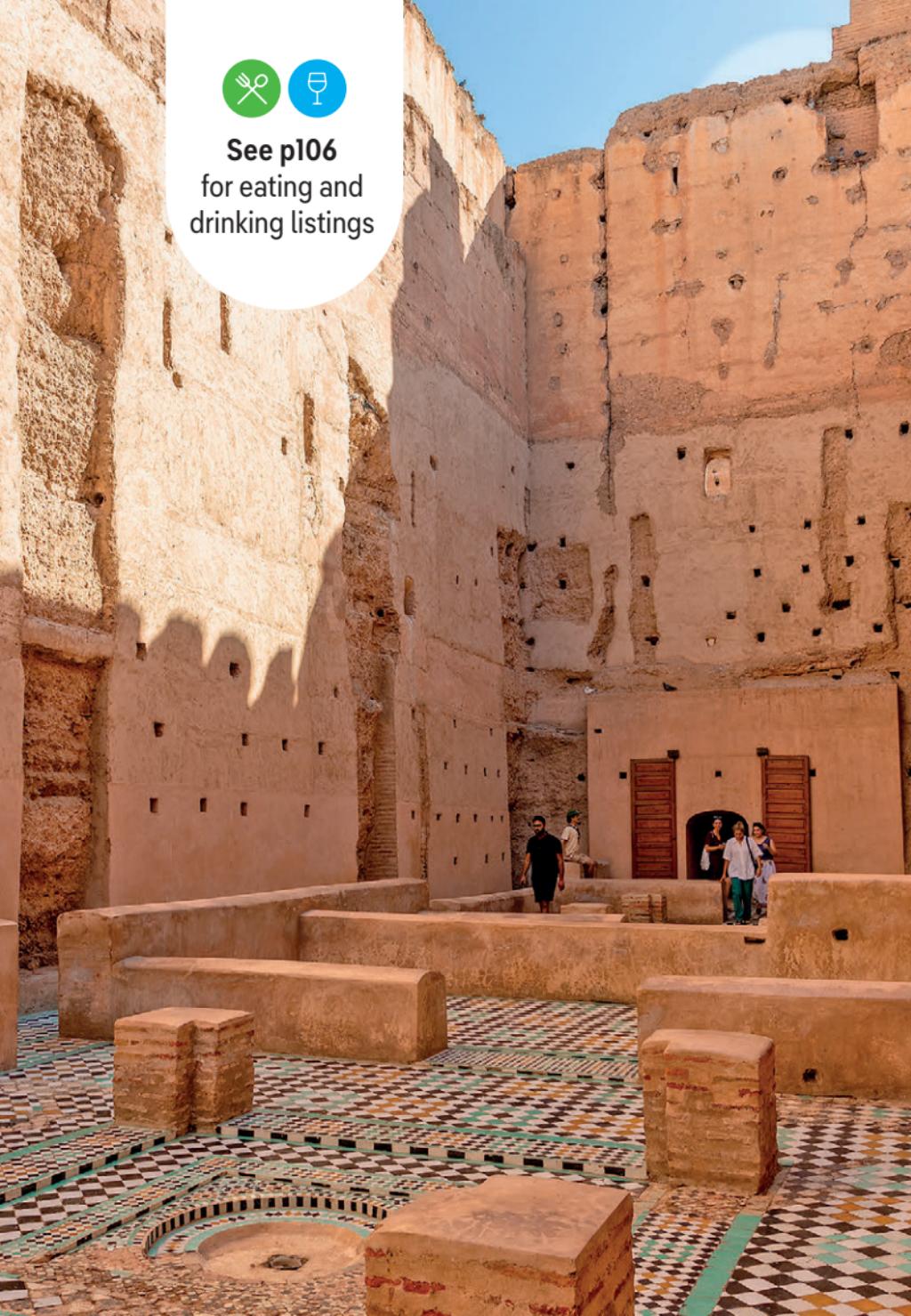
Les Nomades de Marrakech

19 B1

This store seems to go on and on – there's room after room with towering piles of rugs. New ones, old ones, in every size imaginable, they're all waiting to grace someone's home. Fixed prices. They ship worldwide. *lesnomadesdemarrakech. com*; 9.30am-6.30pm



See p106
for eating and
drinking listings



Explore

Kasbah & Mellah

When the Almoravids founded Marrakesh in 1062, this was where they set up camp. A kasbah is a fortress erected for the glory and protection of warmongering sultans. The Royal Palace is still here, along with Badi Palace, the Bahia Palace and large riads for wealthy courtiers. The imposing El Yazidi Mosque is second only to the Koutoubia, and sultans were buried in the nearby Saadian Tombs. In the 1550s, Sultan Abdallah Al Ghalib moved the Jewish population to the Mellah, next to the kasbah. Several synagogues were built, and the oldest, El Azama, is still in use, as is the nearby Jewish cemetery.

Getting Around

Walk

Once in the neighbourhood, you'll be on foot. Rue de la Kasbah is a wide, open street, but the deeper you go into the Kasbah or the Mellah, the smaller the cobbled streets become. It's a 15-minute walk from Djemaa El Fna to the Mellah through Riad Zitoun. For the Kasbah, it's a 20-minute walk.

Taxi

Ask for Rue Bahia Bab Mellah, or Bab Agnaou for the Saadian Tombs.

Calèche

For a scenic option, hire a horse-drawn carriage.



THE BEST

MUSEUM Monde des Arts de la Parure (p105)

ARCHITECTURAL WONDER
Saadian Tombs (p100)

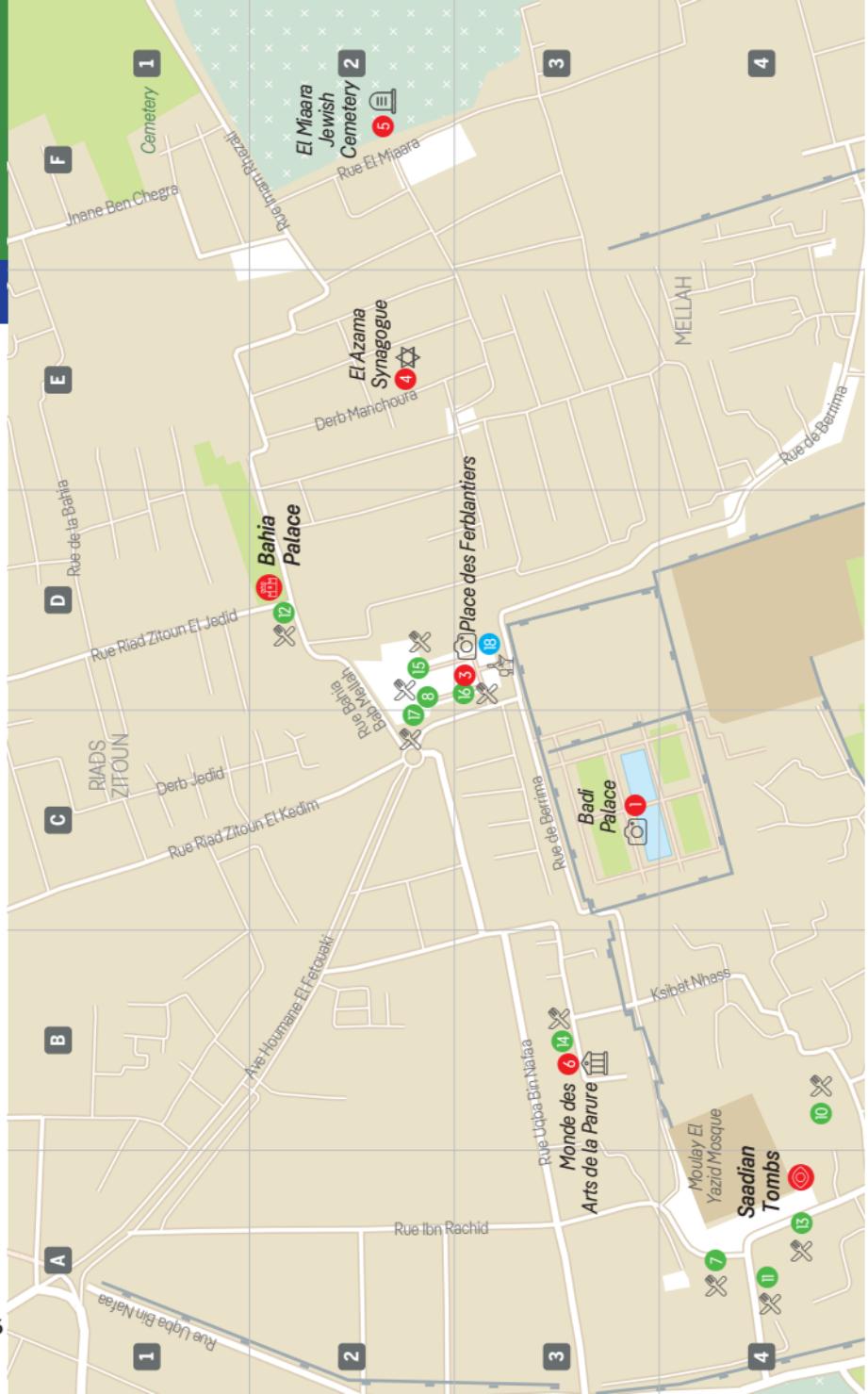
SERENE PALACE Bahia Palace (p98)

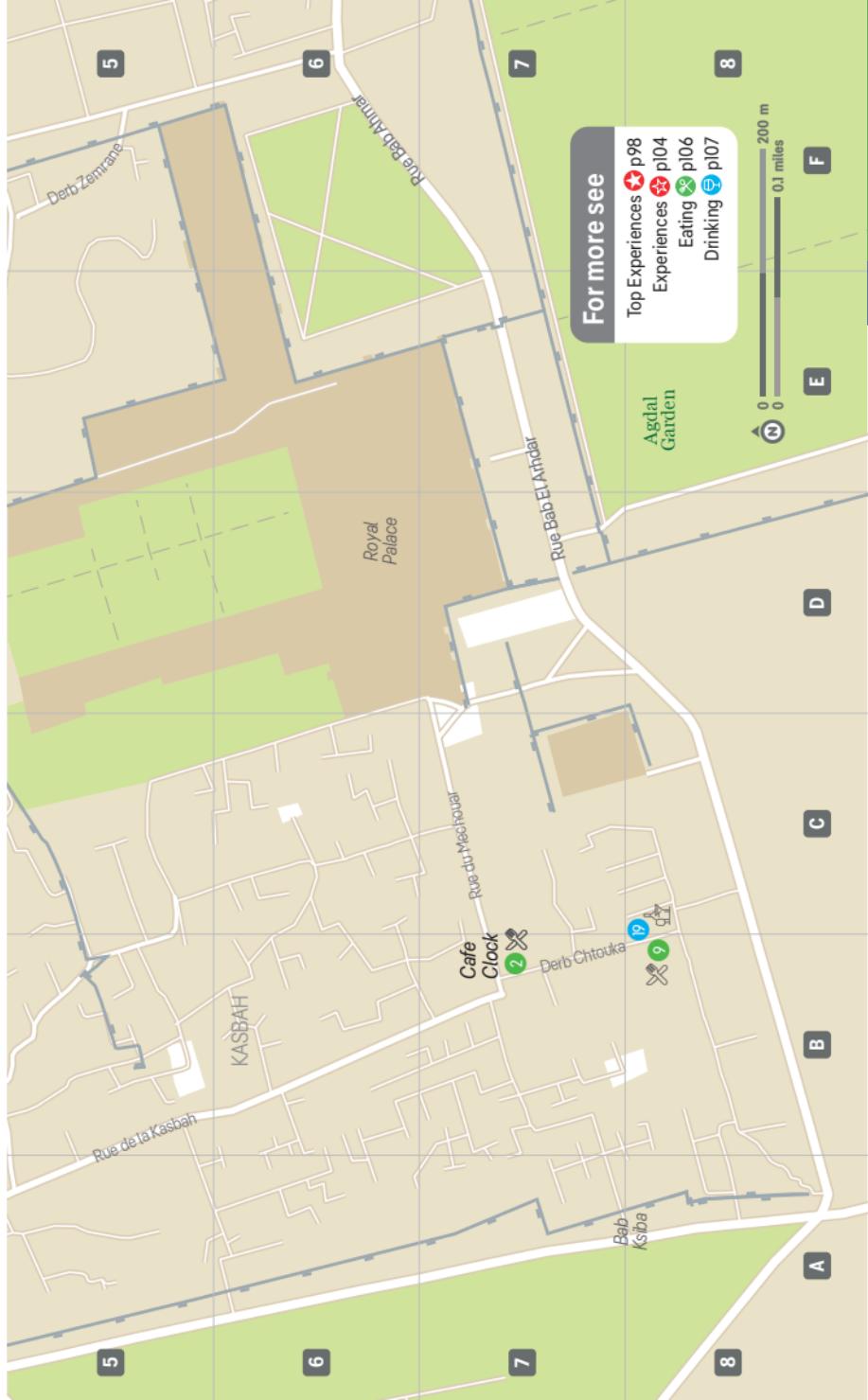
CULTURAL HUB Cafe Clock (p104)

PRETTY SQUARE Place des Ferblantiers (p104)

KASBAH & MELLAH

EXPLORE





★ TOP EXPERIENCE

Bahia Palace

It's not Marrakesh's oldest palace, but the **Bahia** (*adult/child under 12 Dh100/30*) – meaning beautiful – is definitely one of the city's most eye-popping sights, an 8000-sq-metre floor-to-ceiling extravagance of intricate marquetry, plasterwork and *zouak* (painted wood), built by Grand Vizier Si Moussa in the 1860s. Plan on an hour or so here.

MAP P96 D2



PLANNING TIP

Tour groups descend throughout the day, so come for opening or later in the afternoon. Allow plenty of time so that you can pause and wait for passing groups to dissipate.

Petit Riad

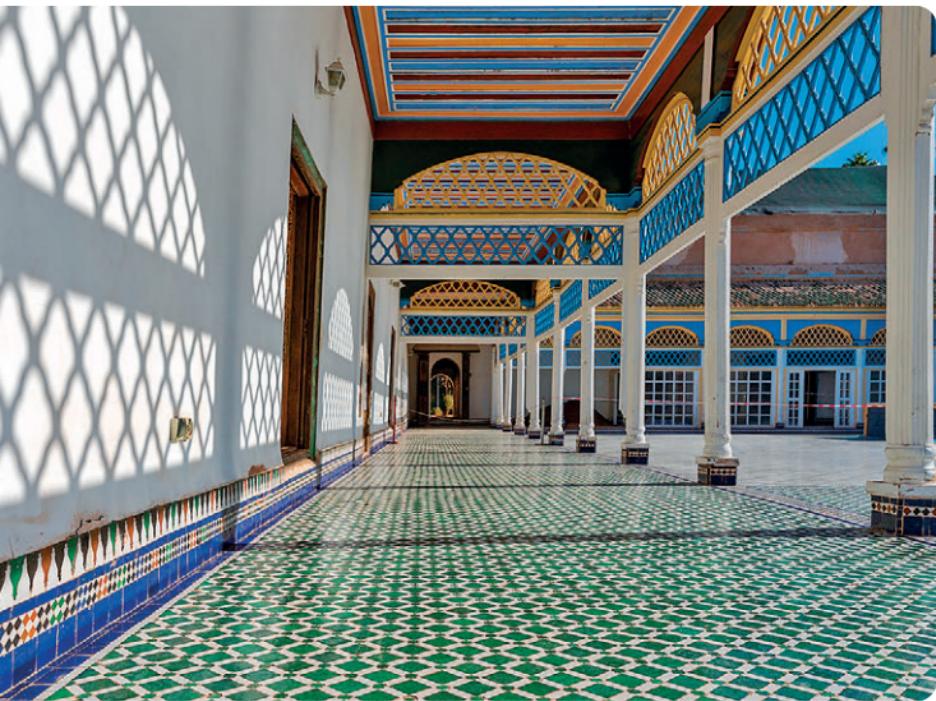
Closest to the entrance, the single-storey **Petit Riad** has walls of intensely elaborate white plasterwork, inscribed with verses from the Quran. In the 19th century, when it was originally decorated, this plaster would have been carved in situ while wet – just imagine the artisan skill required to work so swiftly and accurately.

This area of the palace was a later addition, built when Si Moussa's son and successor Bou Ahmed became Grand Vizier in 1894, and was where he would have received government officials. After Morocco became a French protectorate in 1912, the Petit Riad was used as the private apartments of French Resident-General Lyautey when he was in Marrakesh; he added electricity and heating.

Cour d'Honneur

Sandwiched between the Petit Riad and the Grand Riad, the Grand Cour, or **Cour d'Honneur**, is the undisputed heart of the palace – a spectacular open space of 1500 sq metres, restored to its original brilliance in 2018. The floor is a vast expanse of Italian Carrara marble, encircled by a gallery coloured with bright blue and yellow plaster and woodwork.

When Bou Ahmed expanded the palace, this section was converted into a harem for his four wives and 24 concubines.



SAATON/SHUTTERSTOCK

Grand Riad

Step through the doorway from the Cour d'Honneur into the lush fountain courtyard of the **Grand Riad**.

Riad. This is the oldest part of the palace complex, completed in 1867 by Si Moussa, a former enslaved man who rose through the ranks to become one of Sultan Hassan I's most important aides. The riad's salon is bedecked with carved wood lintels, *zouak* artistry and stained-glass detailing – Bahia Palace was thought to be the first building in North Africa to use stained glass as a decorative feature.

Despite the vast area on show, only a portion of the palace's 8 hectares and 150 rooms is open to the public. Its grand spaces still play host to important cultural events today.



COFFEE STOP

Right opposite the entrance to the Palace is **Beldi Fusion Kitchen** (p106), perfect for coffee or a meal on the rooftop to set you up for the rest of your sightseeing.

★ TOP EXPERIENCE

Saadian Tombs

Sultan Al Mansour was as extravagant in death as he was in life. After the ‘golden king’ built Badi Palace in the 16th century, he transformed an existing necropolis into this lavish **tomb complex** (*adult/child under 12 Dh100/20*). You can gawp at the splendour in about half an hour.

MAP P96 A4



PLANNING TIP

Visit in the afternoon to avoid big tour groups and often long queues to view Al Mansour’s tomb. The entrance is through the archway directly opposite the Kasbah Café.

Chamber of 12 Pillars

Saadian Sultan Al Mansour spared no expense on his tomb, importing Italian Carrara marble and gilding honeycomb *muqarnas* (decorative plasterwork) with pure gold to make the **Chamber of 12 Pillars** (pictured), a suitably glorious mausoleum. Al Mansour died in 1603, and some decades later, Alaouite Sultan Moulay Ismail walled up the Saadian Tombs to keep his predecessors out of sight and mind. It was the French who opened them up again in 1917, after spotting them on an aerial photograph.

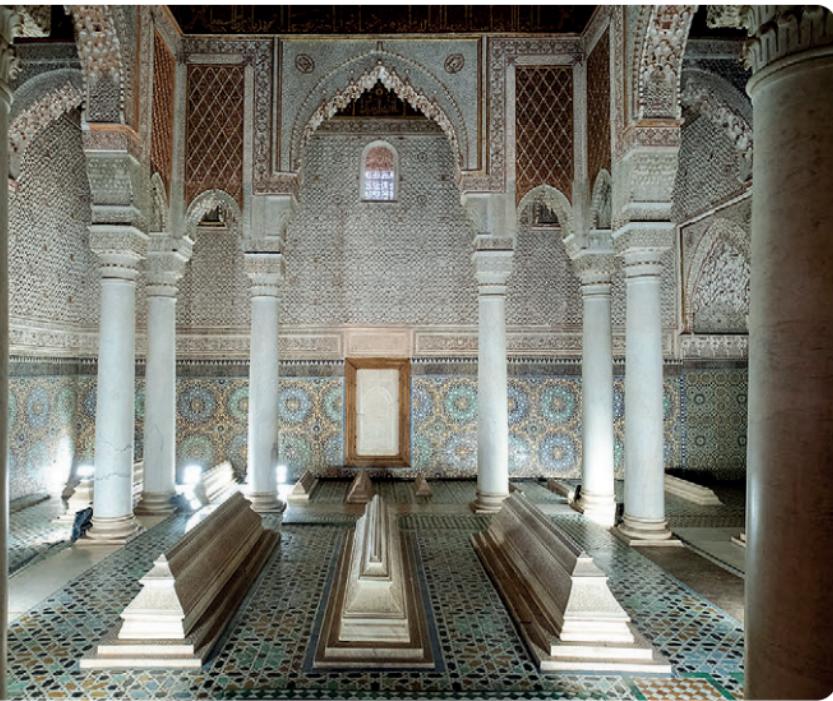
The tomb complex’s main chamber is to the left of the site entrance – just look for the queue. It can only be admired through an arched viewing door, though plans are afoot to build a viewing platform circling the chamber to help ease congestion.

Elaborate *zellige* (colourful geometric mosaic tilework) and the gilded *muqarnas* abound in this hall, and the cupola ceiling is supported by 12 pillars of Carrara marble. Two of these columns are noticeably older – they were plundered from the ancient Roman city of Volubilis.

Late afternoon is the best time for photography as the marble work takes on a golden hue in the light.

Princely Niches

Surrounding the central Chamber of 12 Pillars are two other tomb rooms. Alpha princes were buried



LOIS GOBE/SHUTTERSTOCK

in the **Chamber of the Three Niches**, while the room to the left was originally a prayer room. The intricately carved, pentagon-shaped feature in the back wall is the mihrab (prayer niche).

Mother's Tomb

This **mausoleum** was erected in 1557 and predates the rest of the complex. Al Mansour claimed it for his mother, Lalla Massouda, who lies in the singular tomb recessed in a niche at the back of the mausoleum; the rest belong to other important women of the court.

Next to this structure is the original main entrance to the tombs, blocked up by Moulay Ismail. Accessible for centuries only via the **Moulay El Yazid Mosque**, the tombs were neglected until the French rediscovered them and built the entrance visitors now use.



TAKE A BREAK

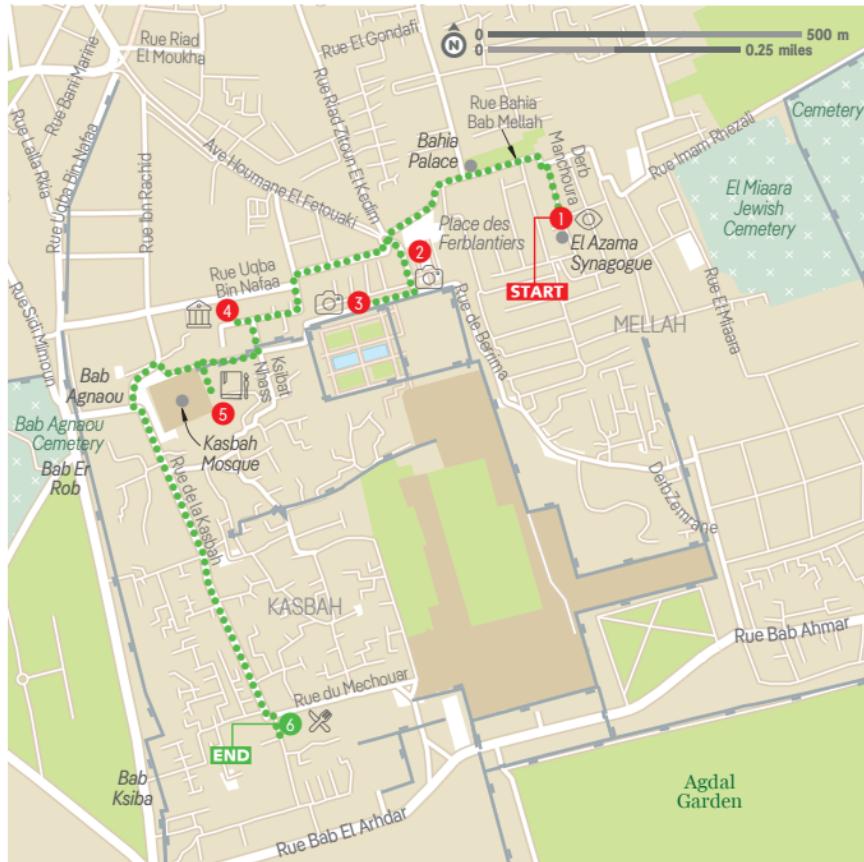
The **Kasbah Café** has prime position right opposite the entrance to the tombs. Take in the amazing rooftop views of the Moulay El Yazid Mosque over a fruit juice.



Walk the Kasbah & Mellah

Begin in the Mellah, a tightly packed old Jewish quarter. From the pretty Place des Ferblantiers, visit the Saadian Tombs and Badi Palace. You're next in the Kasbah, where the Monde des Arts de la Parure will impress you. Following the walls of the Kasbah mosque, you'll soon reach the Saadian Tombs, then Cafe Clock.

START	END	LENGTH
El Azama Synagogue	Cafe Clock	2km; 2 hours



1 Jewish History in the Mellah

Begin at the **El Azama Synagogue** (p105) in the Mellah. Still in operation, this is a fascinating slice of Jewish history in Marrakesh.

2 Prettiest Square

On exiting the synagogue, turn right and walk north along Rue Manchoure. Turn left onto Rue Bahia Bab Mellah, a wider street. Continue along this street with the walls of the Bahia Palace (p98) on your right. At the roundabout take the first left into Rue de Berrima.

Place des Ferblantiers (p104) will be on your left; check out the last few metalworkers (*ferblantiers* means tinsmiths), the spice and homeware shops and the cafes surrounding this pretty square.

3 Saadian Palace Ruins

Continue to the end of Rue de Berrima and turn right into the entrance to the **Badi Palace** (p104), ruins of a monumental palace complex of the Saadian Sultan Al Mansour. Don't miss the dungeons and the minbar (pulpit) of the Koutoubia Mosque kept here.

4 Fabulous Jewellery

Once you've finished at the Badi Palace, retrace your steps to the roundabout and take the next left, Rue Tougma. At the T-junction, turn left into Ksibat Nhass and follow this street round the curve until you reach **Monde des**

Arts de la Parure (Jewellery Museum; p105). Cross the moat at the entrance and explore this magnificent riad museum.

5 Ornate Tombs

On exiting the museum turn right and walk to the next corner, turning right (this is still Ksibat Nhass) and right again. You will soon be walking along the well-restored northern walls of the Moulay El Yazid Mosque (also known as the Kasbah Mosque). When you reach the main road, Rue de la Kasbah (with vehicular traffic), turn left and walk along the eastern wall of the mosque complex. When you reach the end of the mosque walls (the Kasbah Café is directly opposite), enter the small archway on the left into the **Saadian Tombs** (p100), the fantastical final resting place of the Saadian Sultan Al Mansour, who built the Badi Palace.

6 Onto the Clock

After visiting the tombs, turn left and continue walking south along Rue de la Kasbah for 1.4km (20 minutes). After Parapharmacie El Hadbi on your left, the road curves to the left, but continue straight here into Derb Chtouka and **Cafe Clock** (p104) is on your right. Time your visit for one of the Clock's evening music sessions and enjoy something to eat on the roof terrace.

EXPERIENCES

Be Impressed by the Badi Palace Ruins

ARCHITECTURE

MAP: ① P96 C3

The scale of the ruined, 16th-century **Badi Palace** (*adult/child Dh70/300*) built by Sultan Al Mansour is remarkable; mooth around it for an hour or so. All you'll see now are enormous walls topped with storks' nests, and the remains of extensive gardens around a central courtyard with water channels and fountains. It had some 300 rooms embellished with gold and treasures brought along the trans-Saharan trade routes.

Descend into the dungeons where the Sultan kept his prisoners, and there's an exhibition room on the far eastern wall where a CGI film shows what the palace

once looked like. A highlight is the intricate Koutoubia minbar. If you're curious about the craftsmanship within Marrakesh's mosques but can't see inside them, pay it a visit. The minbar's cedarwood steps with gold and silver calligraphy were the work of 12th-century Cordoban artisans headed by a man named Aziz – the Metropolitan Museum of Art restoration revealed his signature.

Soak Up Some Culture at Cafe Clock

CAFE

MAP: ② P96 B7

Sister to the Fez original, **Cafe Clock** (cafeclock.com) is housed in an old school with sunset views over the Kasbah from its rooftop. The food, including veggie options like the falafel super bowl and vegetable *bastilla*, is decent – tourists delight in the signature camel burger. However, its popularity rests on its packed calendar of cultural performances, which also attracts many young Marrakchis.

As well as ad hoc art exhibitions and live Amazigh and gnaoua concerts on Saturday and Sunday, respectively, Cafe Clock hosts weekly sessions of *hikayat* (oral storytelling), inviting local storytellers to weave their magic in a mix of Darija and English.

The cafe also runs a variety of cultural workshops. Sign up for a 101 session on Marrakchi



ENJOY PRETTY PLACE DES FERBLANTIERS

Lovely Place des Ferblantiers

(MAP: ③ P96 D3) was once home to tinsmiths, giving it its name. It still has a few shops where metalworkers make lanterns, lampshades, bathroom basins and interesting metal art. Many shops now sell spices and natural remedies, and there are some homewares stores. Restaurants spill out onto the square, making it a good place to refuel.

culture and language, stir up some Moroccan flavours on a cooking course, learn how to make your pen dance across the page during a calligraphy course or master the basics of playing the oud. The cafe is active in supporting local families and other community projects.

Explore Jewish History at El Azama Synagogue SYNAGOGUE

MAP: ④ P96 E2

Only a couple of synagogues in the Mellah, out of an original 35, are still used by Marrakesh's dwindling Jewish community, including this one, **El Azama** (jmarrakech.org; *donation Dh10*), which doubles as an interesting museum of Jewish life in Morocco. It was originally built in 1492 by Jews expelled from Spain, but this blue-and-white interior is a much later iteration. The synagogue is on the right-hand side of the pretty internal courtyard – note the Star of David motif in *zellige*.

Be Awed by El Miaara Jewish Cemetery JEWISH CEMETERY

MAP: ⑤ P96 F2

The sprawling walled **El Miaara** (cimetierejuifmarrakech.com; *admission Dh10*) Jewish cemetery of whitewashed tombs dates from the 12th century and is still in use. Some 17 *tzaddikim* (spiritual

leaders) are buried here. People come from all over the world to find family members (the website helps with this). When visiting, men are given a yarmulke to wear, and it's customary to wash your hands at the fountain – and tip the guardian – before leaving.

Gawp at the Glittering Gems of Monde des Arts de la Parure

MUSEUM

MAP: ⑥ P96 B3

Step over the moat into the impressive **Monde des Arts de la Parure** (lemapmarrakech.com; *adult/13-25 yr/child Dh100/50/free ; closed Mon*) and prepare to be awestruck by the superb displays of jewellery, saddlery, adornments, textiles and ceremonial garments from around the world. Nearly 3000 pieces from more than 50 countries are professionally curated and expertly lit. Displays carry a QR code to scan so that all is explained in English and French on your phone. There's a rooftop restaurant, as well as a gift and bookshop, so you'll need at least an hour here.

Once two riads, the museum has been completely rebuilt using traditional bricks and cedarwood lintels. The hexagonal central *halka* (ceiling aperture) surrounded by black-painted *mashrabiya* (lattice) is extraordinary.



See p96 for map
of locations

Best Places for...

€ Budget €€ Midrange €€€ Top End



Eating

Cafe Culture

Zeitoun Café €€

7 A4

Pavement seating or on the rooftop while you munch your way through some unusual offerings like a fish tajine or camel *tanjia* (*crockpot stew*), and some pretty indulgent milkshakes, all with striking views of the Moulay El Yazid Mosque. zeitouncafe.com; 9am-1am

Mazel Streetfood

Coffee €€

8 D2

Sitting pretty on Place des Ferblantiers, Mazel has good Mediterranean options like pita and falafels or a vegetarian quinoa bowl, and a Moroccan menu. The speciality coffees are good. It's just the place for a rest under the shady umbrellas.

@mazel_marrakech;
10am-10pm

Top-End Restaurants

Les Jardins de la Medina €€€

9 B8

The restaurant at this luxury hotel is all things to all people: it has a good Moroccan menu, a Mediterranean menu and a vegetarian menu. Plus there's a lunch menu and a 'little hunger' menu with smaller items. You can eat in the lovely garden with its soaring palm trees and large pool, or in the elegant dining room. lesjardinsdelamedina.com; 12.30-3.30pm & 7.30-10.30pm

La Table de la Sultana

€€€

10 B4

Gloriously elegant restaurant on the terrace at La Sultana hotel, set under the brick arches of the verandah overlooking the garden. The food is seasonal, and they have two menus: a modern Moroccan and a French. They use

local products such as cumin from Alnif, argan from the Souss, and oysters from Oualidia. lasultanhoteles.com/marrakech; 7.30-10pm

Traditional Fare

La Table de la Kasbah

€€

11 A4

Located near the handsome Bab Agnaou and with superb views of the restored Moulay El Yazid Mosque from its rooftop, this restaurant ticks all the boxes with its home-style Moroccan dishes. Climb up to the 1st floor for the dining room with its dark walls, lots of carved plaster and comfortable cushions. latabledelakasbah.com; 11am-10.30pm Tue-Sun

Beldi Fusion Kitchen

€€

12 D2

One of a chain of restaurants, this branch is conveniently located right opposite the entrance to the Bahia Palace. It serves reliable Moroccan dishes as well

as lighter meals like tacos and burgers. Climb up to the roof terrace for good views. *0642129109; 8am-11pm*

Kasbah Café ☕

13 A4

Revamped and expanded, this welcoming place is in prime position right opposite the Saadian Tombs, with great views from the rooftop. Expect all the Moroccan favourites and some international dishes. *kasbahcafemarrakech.com; 9am-11pm Mon-Fri, 9am-midnight Sat & Sun*

Affordable Eats

Shams ☺

14 B3

A small menu of excellent Middle Eastern sharing plates awaits on the phenomenal, aromatic rooftop of the Monde des Arts de la Parure (Jewellery Museum; p105). Try the *harrak esbao*, beloved of women in the hammams of Aleppo. *lemapmarrakech.com; 10am-5.30pm*

Chez Taib ☺

15 D2

The simplest and cheapest of the cafes on Place des Ferblantiers, Chez Taib's outside griddle is busy all day producing fresh *batbout* (pita-like bread). With eggs, olives, *jiben* (fresh goat's or cow's milk cheese), honey and olive oil, it makes a great breakfast or anytime snack. *8am-9.30pm*

Chez Kamal &

Brahim ☺

16 D3

This doubled-sided place is a busy grill stall for locals on a parallel street, while on the square they serve the usual tajine and couscous menu. Best is the grilled *kefta* (meatballs): ask for them with *khobz* (bread) and *smen* (fermented butter). *10am-9pm*

Kech Badi ☺

17 C2

Settle in under the sunshades and watch the goings-on on Place des Ferblantiers while you order crepes doused with Nutella or chocolate and an

elaborate, fruit-engorged, ice-cream-topped milkshake. A good place for a sweet treat, though it also has a menu of Moroccan favourites. *@restaurant.kechbadi; 9am-11pm Mon-Fri, to 11.30pm Sat & Sun*



Drinking

Bars

Kosybar

18 D3

Watch the storks at the Badi Palace or come for sunset views. Kosybar is tucked into a corner of Place des Ferblantiers, and is one of the few places to get a drink in this neighbourhood. *kosybar.com; 11am-lam*

Les Jardins de la Medina

19 B8

The smart bar at this elegant hotel is cosy on winter evenings with a roaring fire. If you'd rather enjoy a drink outside in the garden, it serves alcohol from 11am. *lesjardinsdelamedina.com; 7.30-9pm*



See p116
for eating
and shopping
listings



Explore Bab Doukkala & Riad Laârous

When you arrive at Bab Doukkala, you can see it's a local area with few tourists. Through the gate is a wide square revealing everyday Marrakchi life: oranges and breakfast patisserie piled high on carts, a fried-fish place and plenty of butchers.

The important 16th-century Bab Doukkala Mosque has been well restored. Just south of its fountain, look for cooks making *warqa* (filo-like pastry) to create the gossamer-thin sheets for *bastilla* (sweet-savoury pies). This district has several upmarket riad guesthouses, and the delightful Musée du Parfum in Riad Laârous. To the north is the fascinating flea market of Souq El Khemis.

Getting Around

Car & Taxi

Vehicular access in this area is good. Dar El Bacha on Rue Dar El Glaoui is a convenient taxi drop-off point. For the flea market, ask the taxi driver for Bab El Khemis.

Bus

Take Bus 1 from Djemaa El Fna to Place Bab Doukkala.

Walk

Once in the neighbourhood, you'll be on foot. The going is flat, mostly with cobbles underfoot. From Dar El Bacha, head northwest up Rue Fatima Zahra for Bab Doukkala, or north up Rue El Glaoui for Riad Laârous.

Musée du Parfum (p115)

CELIACHEN/SHUTTERSTOCK



THE BEST

MUSEUM Musée du Parfum (p115)

ACTION CENTRE Pikala Bikes (p114)

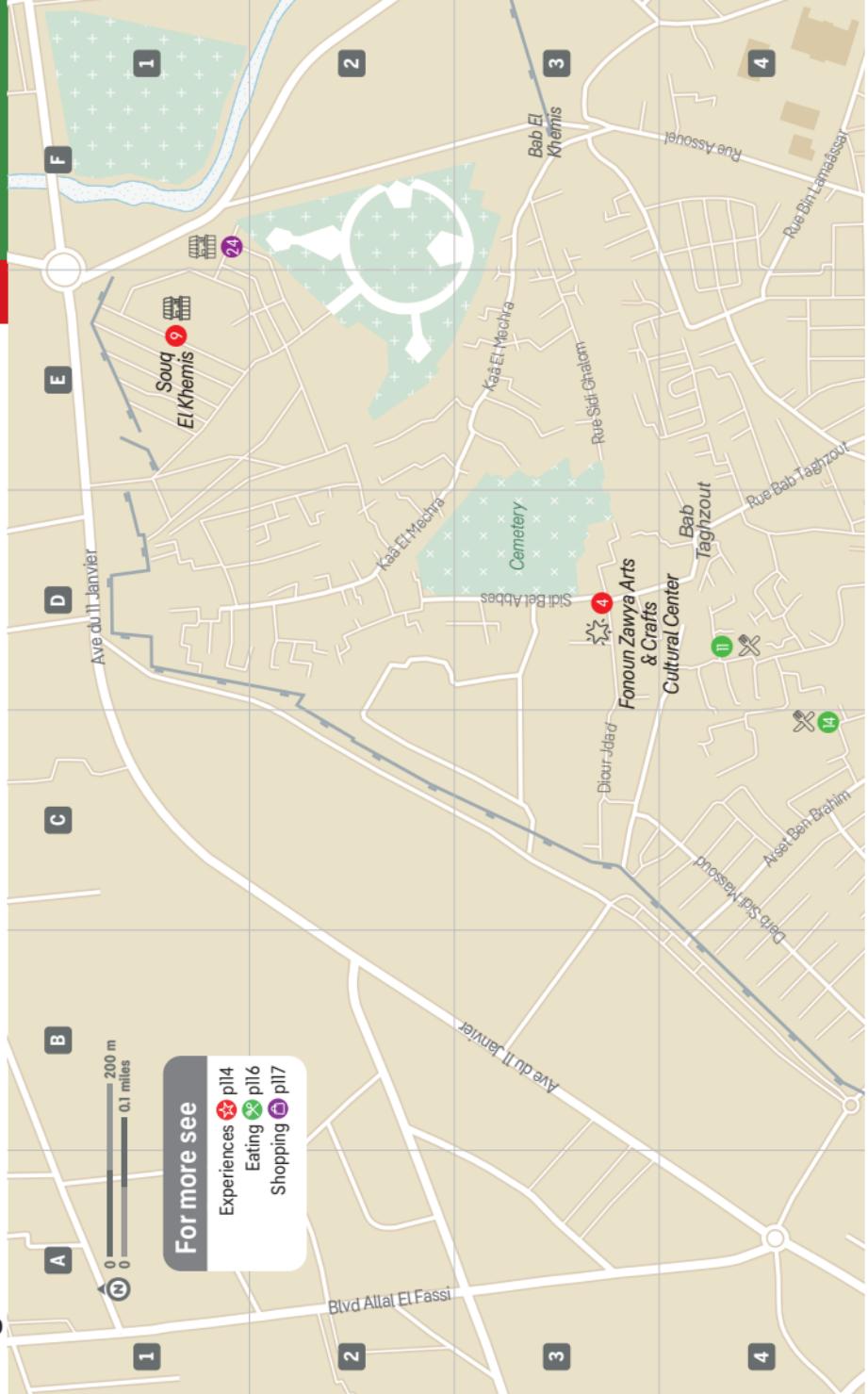
ARCHITECTURE Bab Doukkala Mosque (p113)

BROWSING Souq El Khemis (p115)

FINE-DINING RESTAURANT Naama (p116)

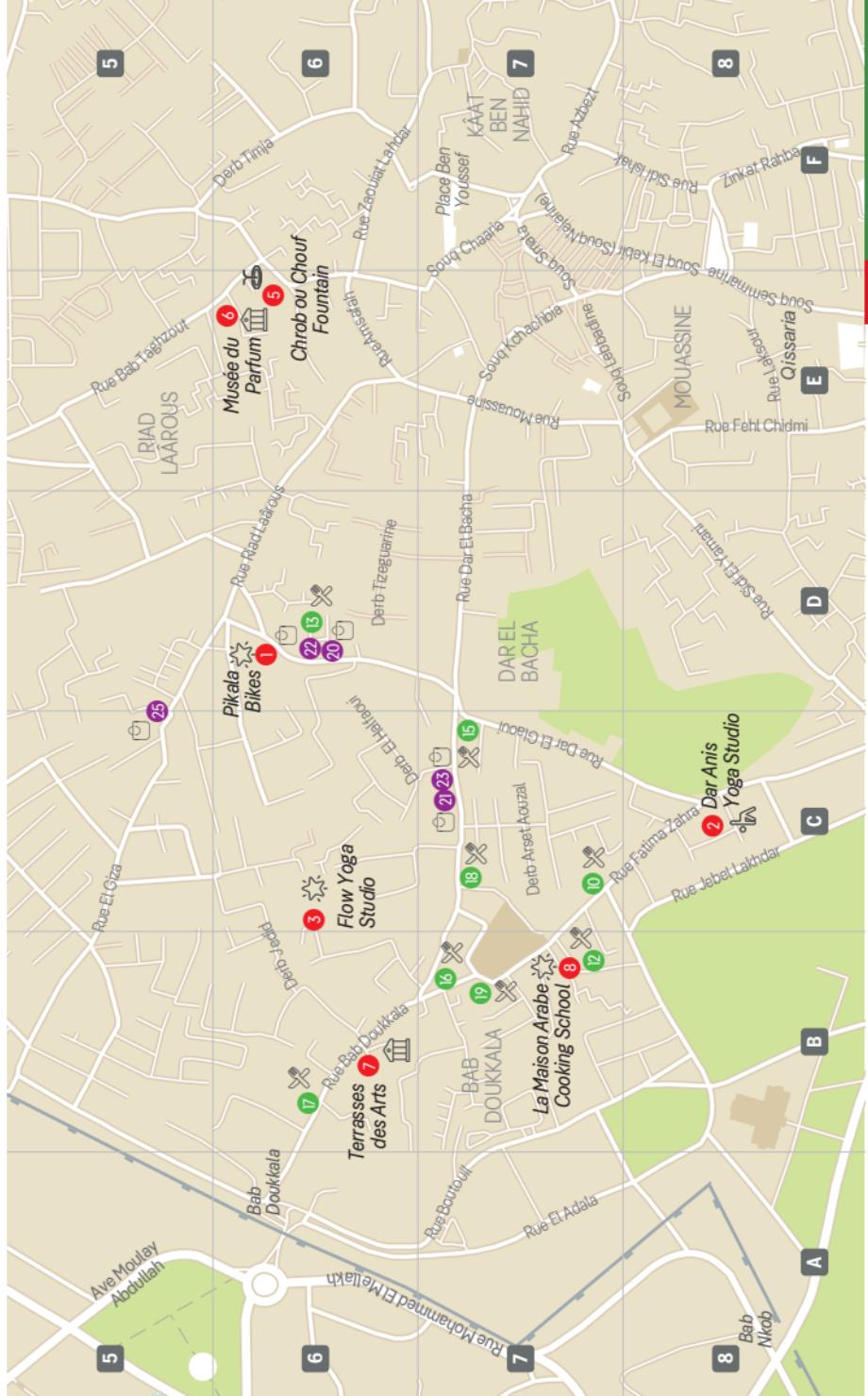
BAB DOUKKALA & RIAD LAÂROUS

EXPLORE



For more see

- Experiences
- Eating
- Shopping

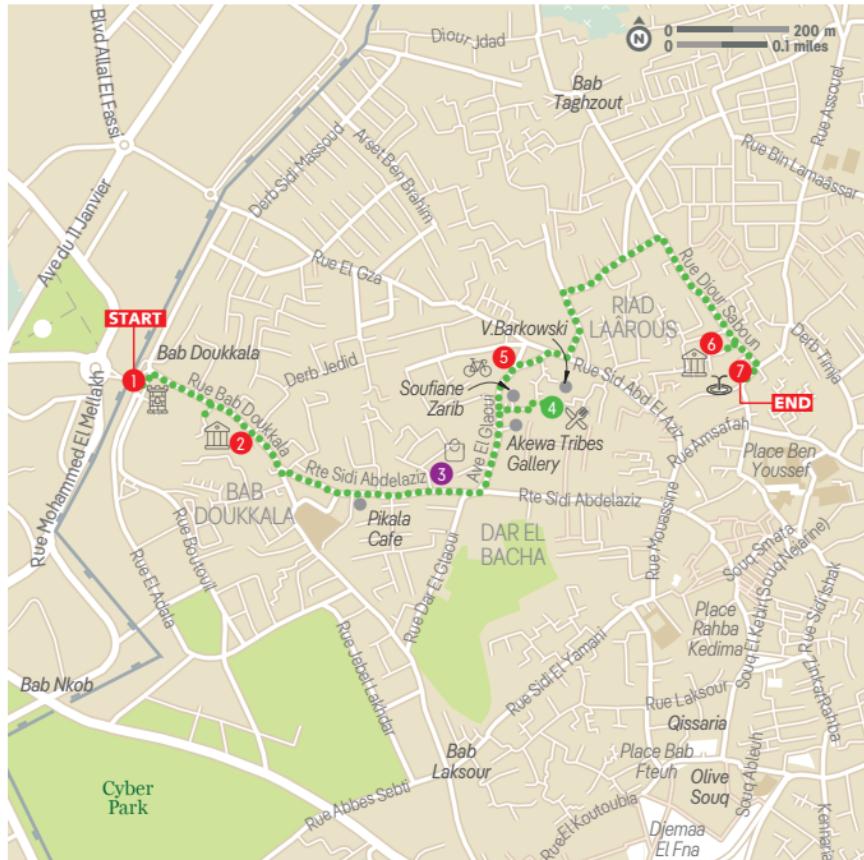




Walk Bab Doukkala & Riad Laârous

Enter through the imposing gate into the busy Bab Doukkala market square that's bustling with local food shops and stalls. Visit two small museums and a number of on-trend clothing and homeware stores as well as Marrakesh's coolest restaurant. End at the curious Chrob ou Chouf Fountain.

START	END	LENGTH
Bab Doukkala	Chrob ou Chouf Fountain	2km; 1 hour



1 Doukkala Tribe's Gate

Bab Doukkala is the main gate to the northwestern medina. The dog-leg inside the gate offered greater defence and visitors couldn't escape paying a toll. Erected around 1126, it was the main gate for the Doukkala tribe from the plains between Marrakesh and Casablanca. Once through the gate, turn left, then right onto Rue Bab Doukkala, full of street-food options.

2 Amazigh Arts

After 200m, turn right into Derb L'Hotel and you'll soon come to **Terrasses des Arts** (p115) at No 34. Knock to enter and visit the exquisite museum of Amazigh jewellery, carpets, ceramics, weaponry and textiles. There's a shop too. Upstairs is a photography gallery.

3 Shopping Street

Retrace your steps, turn right and continue your wander down Rue Bab Doukkala. After 200m, the road forks; Bab Doukkala Mosque is further along the right fork. Take the left fork and continue on Rue Sidi Abdel Aziz. There are some good shops along here, and the Pikala Café (p117) is great for a break. After about 250m are two excellent homeware shops on the left, **Mustapha Blaoui** (p117) and **V. Barkowski** (p117).

4 Supercool Garden Restaurant

Continue to the junction and turn left onto Ave El Glaoui. Walk north

for 200m where you'll see more interesting shops such as designer Akéwa Tribes Gallery (p117). Take the next turning to the right into Derb Sidi Ali Ben Hamdouch, follow the twists and turns to **Les Jardins du Lotus** (p116), an excellent lunch stop.

5 On Two Wheels

Retracing your steps to Ave El Glaoui and turn right. Immediately on your right is carpet maestro Soufiane Zarib (p117) – ring the doorbell to be admitted to admire beautiful carpets and stylish homeware. Make a note of **Pikala Bikes** (p114) 75m further along, so you can return to hire bikes and go on a cycling adventure.

6 Aromatherapy

Walk northeast across the square, turn right onto Rue El Gza and immediately left into Trik Jazouli. Follow this street for 140m, then turn right into Rue Ank Jemel. Continue for 200m then turn right into Rue Diour Saboun. After 240m turn right again and the **Musée du Parfum** (p115) will be on your right. Book ahead if you want to make your own perfume.

7 Chrob ou Chouf Fountain

Exit the museum, retrace your steps to Rue Diour Saboun and turn right. After 120m you'll see the tall **Chrob ou Chouf Fountain** (p114) on the wall to your left.

EXPERIENCES

Get Active in Marrakesh

CYCLING & YOGA

Dutch-funded non-profit **Pikalabikes** (MAP: ① P110 D6; pikalabikes.com; 3hr tour adult/child Dh280/150) is a community project on a mission to get young Marrakchis to ditch motorbike aspirations in favour of good, old-fashioned cycling. Group cycling tours depart from its Riad Laârous garage most mornings at 9.30am and afternoons at 3pm and include a backstreet tea break and interesting cultural insights. Proceeds pay to train young men and women as mechanics or professional tour guides.



A DROP TO DRINK

Marrakesh's medina is dotted with public water fountains, but the UNESCO-listed, 16th-century **Chrob ou Chouf (Chrab wa Chouf)** Fountain ('Drink and Look'; MAP: ⑤ P110 E6) still holds on to shreds of former finery with its intricately carved cedar-wood lintel. Unlike many others, the fountain is still used and you'll likely see passing pedestrians stopping for a quick drink as you admire the artistry. Underground channels supply water to the fountain in the same way as at Ben Youssef Medersa and Le Jardin Secret.

Dar Anis Yoga Studio (MAP: ②)

P110 C8; marrakechyogastudio.com; class Dh200) offers daily drop-in classes in a blissful riad. The tiled courtyard, air-conditioned salon and terracotta roof provide space for flow yoga, sound bath meditations and SoundMoves restorative yoga. Try the half-day wellness retreat that includes a yoga class, a relaxing one-hour massage and a healthy lunch for €95.

Weekly Vinyasa Flow yoga classes are offered at **Flow Yoga Studio** (MAP: ③ P110 C6; theflowyogastudio.com; class €25), as well as one-on-one and group sessions. The studio is located in Riad BE and residential courses are held here too. Book in advance to attend a class.

Try Hands-On Crafts at Fonoun Zawya Arts & Crafts Cultural Center

CRAFT COURSES

MAP: ④ P110 D3

In a delightful square near the Sidi Bel Abbes Zawiya (Sufi lodge) in an untouristed part of the medina, **Fonoun Zawya Arts & Crafts Cultural Center** (zawyatyc.com; 2½-4hr courses Dh350-500) operates classes in the morning, and introduces local students to the *mâalems* (master artisans) in the afternoons at no charge to get them interested in crafts. Make metal jewellery, a *zellige* (mosaic) tile, wood sculpture or leather purse, followed by a buffet lunch on the rooftop (Dh150 extra).

Enjoy Olfactory Delights at Musée du Parfum

MUSEUM

MAP: 6 P110 E6

With Morocco producing some of the world's best rose otto essential oil, it's not surprising that there's a whole room at the **Musée du Parfum** (*Perfume Museum; benchaabane.com/lemuseeduparfum; adult/child Dh50/free*) dedicated to these delicate petals. Other rooms cover topics such as hammam rituals, the cosmetic benefits of argan and prickly pear oils, and the role of aromatherapy, herbs and spices in Moroccan culture. If you're into things olfactory, you can create your own perfume at the remarkable perfume bar, or even sign up for a private workshop to make a personal scent with help from the museum manager (from Dh1200). The shady courtyard cafe is a relaxing place for a pot of tea.

Discover Amazigh Arts at Terrasses des Arts

MUSEUM

MAP: 7 P110 B6

The exquisitely appointed **Terrasses des Arts** (*lesterrassesdesarts.ma; museum free*) houses three distinct levels. On the ground floor is an extensive museum curated by the Bouskri family of Amazigh antiques including carpets, textiles, ceramics, jewellery and weaponry. The 2nd floor is a photography gallery featuring architecture, people and places in the medina. On the ground floor and rooftop terrace is an elegant restaurant serving a Moroccan and international menu.

Learn to Cook Morocco-Style at La Maison Arabe Cooking School

COOKING CLASS

MAP: 8 P110 B7

Learn about Moroccan cuisine at **La Maison Arabe Cooking School** (*cenizaro.com; half-day course Dh600*) at this top medina hotel. There are state-of-the-art teaching kitchens with a screen at each station located at the hotel and at its bucolic Country Club just outside the city. Various courses are on offer from a half-day to a five-day intensive course, and one on Moroccan Sephardic Jewish cooking. In the 3½-hour lesson, you'll make a starter and a main dish and watch a demonstration of dessert before eating lunch. Conveniently for those pressed for time, it offers a one-hour express course, too.

Explore Souq El Khemis, a Huge Flea Market

MARKET

MAP: 9 P110 E1

At the northern tip of the medina, **Souq El Khemis** is a vast market selling just about anything you can think of. The most interesting group of shops is on the eastern side, known as the **Moroccan Doors Market** (p117). You'll find massive cedarwood doors that once graced a palace courtyard, painted wooden chests from the Rif or carved grain store doors from the south, as well as smaller items. This is a wonderful place for treasure-seekers.

LISTINGS

Best Places for...

€ Budget €€ Midrange €€€ Top End



Eating

Fine Dining

Naama €€€

10 C7

Part of Riad 72, the architecture, design and decor are on a par with Chef Aniss Meski's superb traditional-meets-modern food cooked on his Josper grill with traditional *tafarnout* bread baked in the rooftop oven. Share a tiramisu for dessert. naamamarrakech.com; noon-11pm Tue-Sun

Dar Zellij €€€

11 D4

For romantic dining in a 17th-century riad, Dar Zellij prevails. The menu is traditional with excellent signature dishes. A belly dancer entertains on Thursday and Sunday. darzellij.com; noon-midnight Wed-Mon

La Maison Arabe €€€

12 B7

Dining is candle-lit, either poolside or in formal wood-panelled salons, with a backdrop of live classical Andalusian music. Local

wines accompany the menu of international dishes and refined Moroccan classics. Complete your feast with *amlou* (argan-nut butter) tiramisu. lamaisonarabe.com; noon-11pm

Traditional & Mediterranean

Les Jardins du Lotus €€€

13 D6

Set in a tree-filled garden and riad, this restaurant is very pretty, but the pervading fragrance is overwhelming. It's the place to be seen at night when a DJ plays and it's jam-packed. Dinner service is at 7pm, 9pm and 11pm; the food is very Instagrammable. [@lesjardinsdulotus](http://lesjardinsdulotus.com); noon-2am

Noujoum €€€

14 C4

With a menu of small and large sharing plates, this elegant rooftop bar and restaurant serves dishes that showcase local products and combine traditional fare and Mediterranean flair. It's part of chic riad, Dar Izza. izza.com/food-and-drink; noon-10pm



See p110 for map of locations

Dar Moha €€€

15 C7

Set in couturier Pierre Balmain's former house with celebrity chef Mohamed 'Moha' Fedal at the helm, this is a memorable setting. Expect updated local classics served around the big pool under mature trees. The evening menu is a five-course extravaganza. darmoha.ma; 11am-4pm & 7.30pm-midnight

Affordable Eating

Zaman Food €

16 B7

There's friendly service at this simple restaurant serving Moroccan classics and a range of tacos and paninis. Tucked next to the Doukkala Mosque, you can eat at street level or climb up to the terrace for super views. [@zaman_food_7am-midnight](http://zaman_food_7am-midnight)

Snack Friture de Poisson €

17 B6

This place does a roaring trade in fried fish, calamari, mixed seafood, salad, chips and bread. Squirt on mayonnaise or ketchup and tuck in to one of the cheapest meals in the medina. 9.30am-11pm

Pikala Café ☺

18 C7

There's a rustic feel to this rambling cafe with pretty, turquoise chairs and orange cushions. Doubling as a co-working space, it also has live music weekly. It celebrates good produce with a mostly vegetarian and vegan menu, with plenty of juices and teas. pikalabikes.com; 9am-4.30pm Sun-Wed, to 9.30pm Thu-Sat

Regue Jamaa ☺

19 B7

Perch under a straw umbrella on the front terrace of this laid-back cafe. There's a long juice list, from peach to strawberry and avocado with almond, plus slap-up breakfasts and a straightforward menu of Moroccan classics, hamburgers and paninis. @regue_jamaa; 8.30am-midnight



Shopping

Designer Clothes

Akéwa Tribes Gallery

20 D6

Stylish menswear and womenswear in fabrics

from West Africa fill this little shop, an offshoot of the branch in Riad Zitoun El Kedim (p61). Everything is ethically produced. It also stocks accessories such as handbags, and some homewares such as cushions. akewa-tribes.com; 10am-7pm

Homewares

Mustapha Blaoui

21 C7

Concealed behind an inconspicuous wooden door with no sign, this grand emporium offers a relaxed shopping experience amid several chock-a-block rooms holding everything from cushions and carpets to tables and teapots. maisonblaoui.ma; 10am-7.30pm

Soufiane Zarib

22 D6

Soufiane Zarib buys his own wool and employs weavers to produce carpets that are distinctly Moroccan in style, yet made to his own designs. Ring the bell to be admitted to browse rugs, handpicked ceramics and furniture. soufiane-zarib.com; 8.30am-7.30pm Mon-Sat

V. Barkowski

23 C7

Visit for high-quality neutral-coloured towels with colour-flash tassels, handcrafted leather tote bags and cotton dressing gowns fashioned after Moroccan djellaba (traditional hooded garments). valeriebarkowski.com; 9.30am-1.30pm & 3-7pm

Moroccan Doors Market

24 F1

The most interesting shops in enormous flea market Souq El Khemis in the northern tip of the medina are the Moroccan Doors Market on the eastern side, just the place if you're furnishing a riad or hoping for treasures. Thursday and Sunday are best. Sat-Thu

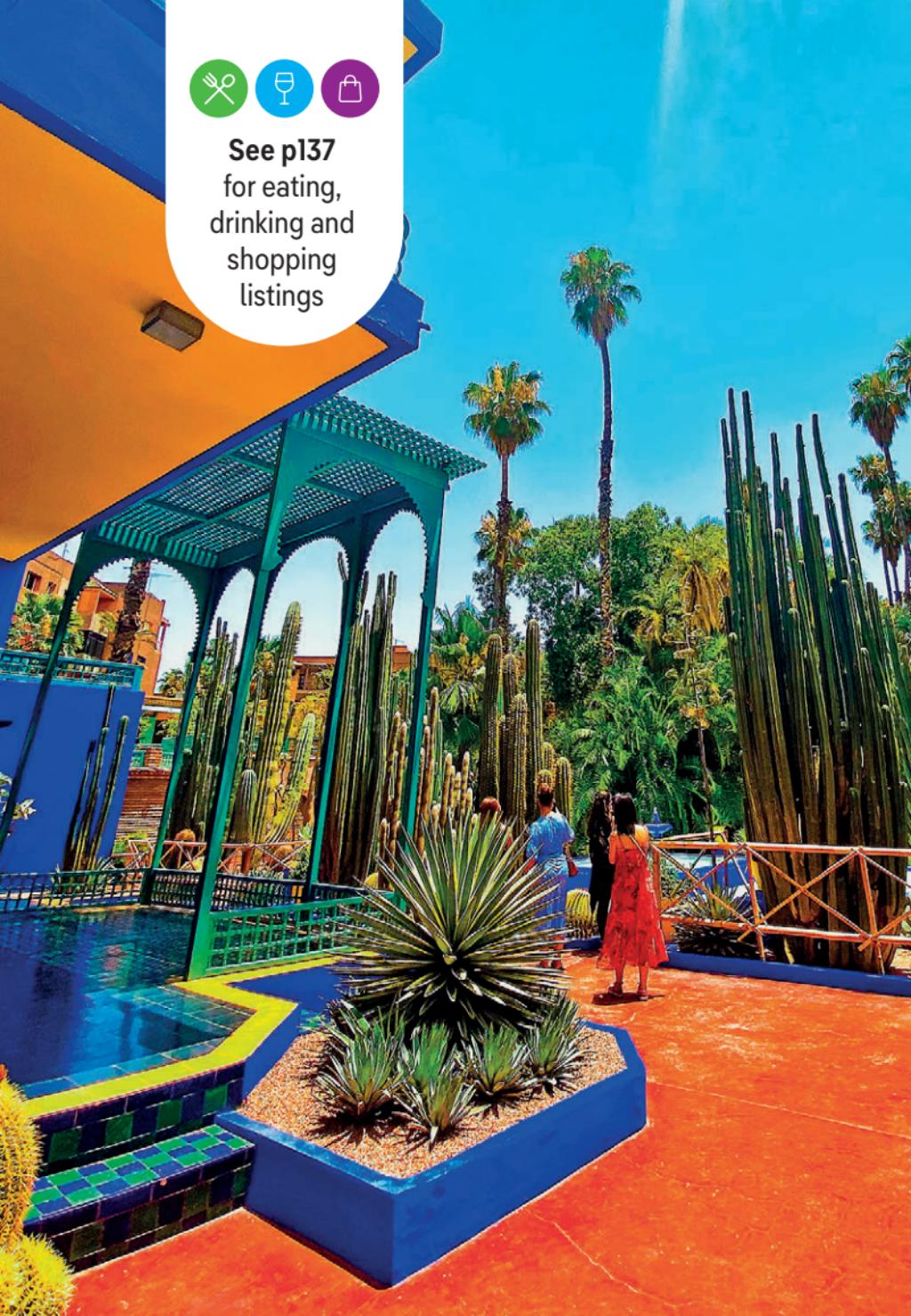
Al Kawtar

25 C5

This non-profit collective trains women with disabilities in embroidery craft, and sells fine homewares that combine traditional needlework with neutral colours. Pick up some beautiful bed linen or a tablecloth here; your money's going to a good cause. alkawtarcoop.wordpress.com; 10am-7pm



See p137
for eating,
drinking and
shopping
listings



Explore Gueliz & Ville Nouvelle

If the medina is medieval madness, Gueliz is all about glamour with a touch of 1930s style. The heart of Marrakesh's Ville Nouvelle has wide boulevards, plenty of parks and stylish apartment blocks, but the original French art deco villas, hotels and cinemas are fast disappearing. Numerous galleries showcase contemporary artists, chefs use superb local produce to conjure up a modern riff on Moroccan cuisine, and cafe culture abounds. The sublime Jardin Majorelle and dazzling Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech lie just northeast of Gueliz. On the city's northern edge is the Sidi Ghanem zone of designer outlets, and the Palmeraie has art museums in large gardens.

Getting Around

Walk

To reach Gueliz, walk from the medina in 30 minutes. The Ville Nouvelle is flat and fairly easy to get around on foot.

Taxi

A *petit taxi* from the medina costs around Dh15 to Gueliz. Getting to the Jardin Majorelle and Musée YSL from the medina costs about Dh25. Getting back is more expensive: taxis wait at the nearby rank and charge at least Dh50 back to the medina.

Bus

Bus 1 from Arset El Bilk goes to Gueliz from the medina, or you can take a *calèche* (horse-drawn carriage).

Jardin Majorelle (p122)

YASEMINRKS/SHUTTERSTOCK



THE BEST

GARDEN Jardin Majorelle (p122)

MUSEUM Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech (p127)

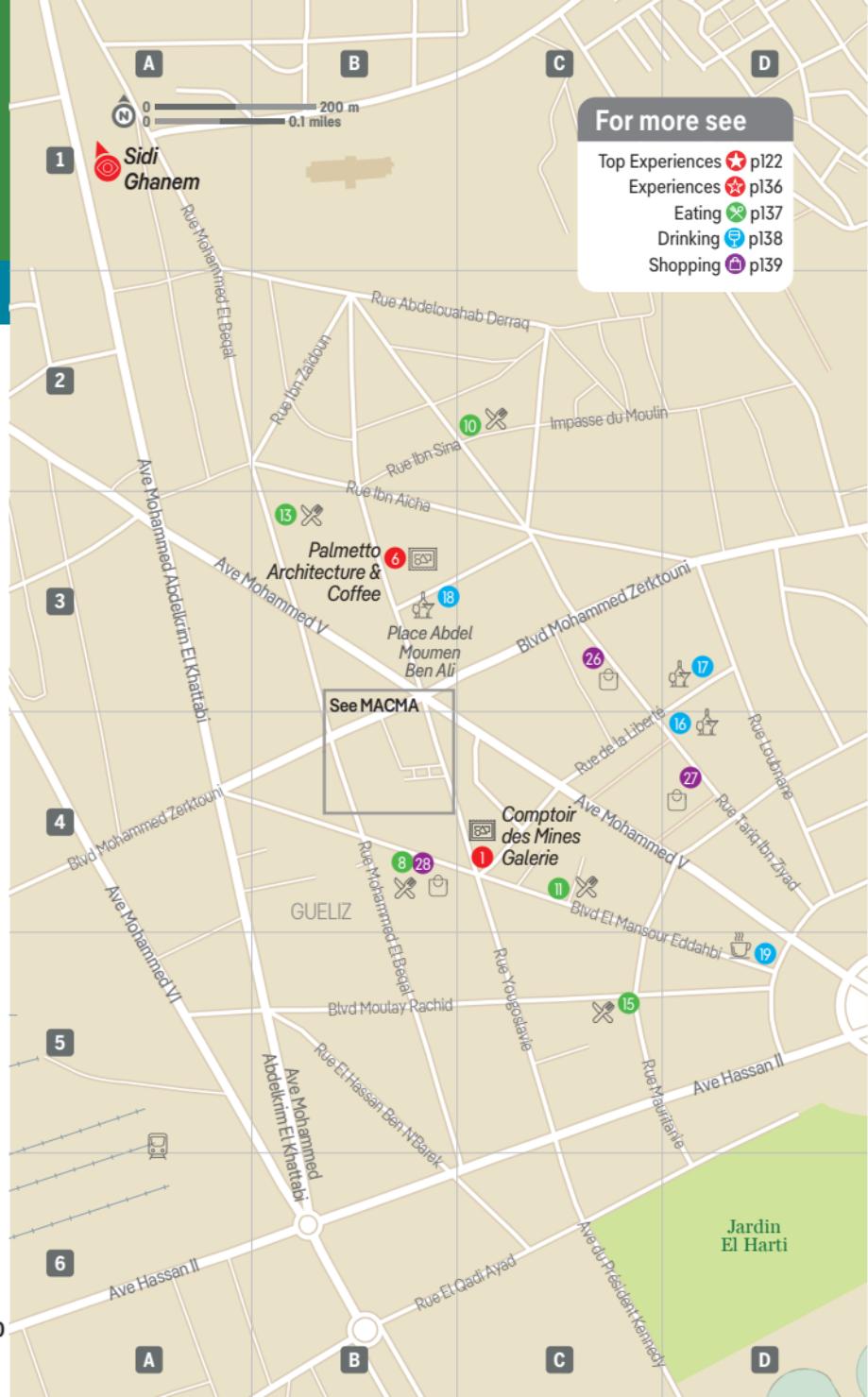
SOUVENIR Tin of Majorelle blue paint from Jardin Majorelle's bookshop (p125)

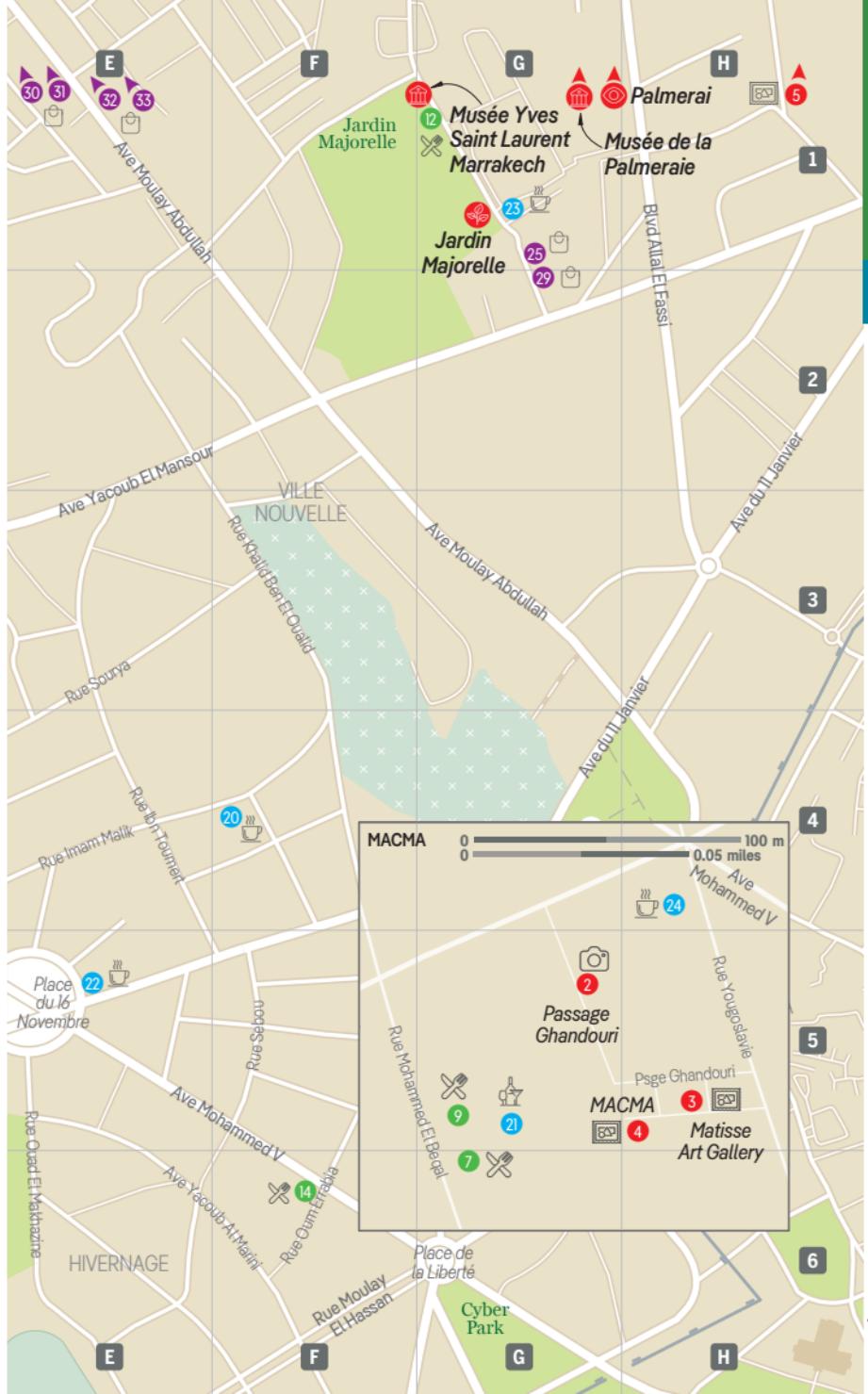
RESTAURANT Farmers (p137)

ART DECO ARCHITECTURE Comptoir des Mines Galerie (p136)

GUELIZ & VILLE NOUVELLE

EXPLORE





★ TOP EXPERIENCE

Jardin Majorelle

The **Jardin Majorelle** (*adult/child under 10 Dh150/free, incl Musée Pierre Bergé des Arts Berbères Dh230/free, incl Musée YSL Dh330/free*) is an iconic symbol of Marrakesh. Despite its popularity, its walkways and pools through tall palms, whispering bamboo and cacti of every shape retain a sense of serenity. The excellent Musée Pierre Bergé des Arts Berbères is located in the garden, as well as a cafe, shop and bookshop.

MAP P120 GI



PLANNING TIP

Tickets for your time-sensitive visit are available online only. Jardin Majorelle opens at 8.30am; go as early as possible to avoid the crowds and summer heat.



Scan this QR code for full opening hours and to book ahead.

The Garden

As you walk around the garden on its crisscrossing red paths, you'll see the soaring palm trees, the flowering plants, the corridors of tall bamboo, the prolific birdlife and the remarkable collection of cacti, planted with plenty of space around each one so that each plant can be appreciated individually. There's a rill leading to a reflecting pool under a graceful gazebo, and other pools stocked with fish (pictured). The buildings are painted that bright Majorelle blue, with yellow accents. It's true there are a lot of visitors, but get your timing right and you can soak up the light and tranquillity of the garden to your heart's content.

Jardin Majorelle is thronged by almost a million visitors a year, making it Morocco's most popular tourist sight. It's far from the peaceful oasis it was a decade ago, but it's still an extremely stylish place with magical gardens, art deco architecture and an excellent museum.

The garden and museum are fully accessible for wheelchair users.

How the Garden Was Saved

The garden was first opened to the public in 1947 when Jacques Majorelle found the upkeep too



LIZAVETTA/SHUTTERSTOCK

expensive, but was then abandoned after his death in 1962 until Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé made it their mission to save it.

The French couturier and his partner had a house in Marrakesh and loved to visit the garden. When they learned that it was up for development, the pair bought the property in 1980 and converted Villa Oasis into their home. Since then, the garden has been restored, and many new plants have been added.

Plant Species

The garden is home to more than 300 plant species from five continents, mostly collected by Jacques Majorelle over several decades of globetrotting.

Aspiring botanists will be in seventh heaven, but it's a wonderful space to explore whether you're a



BUY COMBINED TICKETS

Save on costs by buying a combined Jardin Majorelle, Musée Pierre Bergé des Arts Berbères and Musée Yves Saint Laurent ticket. The garden visit is time-sensitive, and you visit this first.



COFFEE STOP

The Café Majorelle

(pictured) is in a building inspired by High Atlas kasbahs. It contains small salons with fireplaces and an inner courtyard with orange trees and white bougainvilleas.

plant super fan or not. Regular signage includes useful illustrations to help visitors identify everything from Mexican agave to Chinese windmill palms and North African date palms. A team of 19 gardeners works all hours to maintain the plants and pools and carry out major projects.

Villa Oasis Gardens

In 2018 the **Villa Oasis** gardens opened to the public for the first time. Accessed via a pathway draped with bright bougainvillea and distinct from the main gardens, they are arguably the more sumptuous and engrossing of the two and have greatly enhanced the visitor appeal of the complex.

Musée Pierre Bergé des Arts Berbères

Jacques Majorelle's former studio, in the garden, is now the compelling **Musée Pierre Bergé des Arts Berbères** (Pierre Bergé Museum of Berber Arts) of four rooms displaying Amazigh culture from the Rif

POSZTOS/SHUTTERSTOCK



to the Sahara. Traditional skills and craftsmanship in leather, ceramics, wood, metalwork and basket weaving are shown, alongside exceptional silver jewellery set with precious stones that denotes a woman's tribal identity and wealth. Weavings, garments, accessories, carpets and music are explored, all explained through photography, film, audio and music.

Shopping

Attached to the museum is a **bookshop** that features some beautiful coffee-table books on plants and gardens published by the Majorelle Foundation as well as other books on Morocco. Then there's a shop that sells YSL's Love Postcards, stylish accessories, pots of blue paint so you too can have a bright blue planter, and teas from **Moroccan Botanist** (p78).

Yves Saint Laurent Memorial

One of the most popular spots in the garden is the **memorial**. Find it along the back wall on the opposite side of the gardens to the entrance/exit. If you can block out the photographers and Instagrammers, it's a poignant space. The memorial is an ancient Roman pillar, which Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé found on a beach in Tangier. Bergé was added to the memorial after his death in Provence, France, in 2017.

Who Was Jacques Majorelle?

Invited to visit by the resident governor, General Lyautey, the young French Orientalist painter Jacques Majorelle was enthralled by the sights, the light and the exoticism of Morocco. In 1924, Majorelle bought some land just outside Marrakesh and built his family home among the palms and poplar trees. The house was painted the bright hue that is now known as Majorelle blue, inspired by the bold Moroccan skies, the shade of blue in traditional Moroccan tiles and the head-turning blue veils of the Tuareg people in the southern Sahara.



ALLOW ENOUGH TIME

Count on a half-day to see everything here: at least 1½ hours wandering the garden and Museum of Berber Arts, more to browse the shop and stop at Café Majorelle. You'll need about an hour at the YSL Museum, too, where there's also a shop and restaurant. There are also some excellent designer shops along Rue Yves Saint Laurent approaching the garden.



ALEXANDER_MAGNUM/SHUTTERSTOCK



FARMERS MARKET

If you're at the garden on a Saturday, look out for the **farmers market** (10am-2pm) held by the Fondation Majorelle and RIAM (Network of Agroecological Initiatives in Morocco) selling fresh, organic products.

For almost 40 years, Majorelle painted, contributed to architectural projects such as **Hotel La Mamounia** (p56), raised a family and planted his garden with exotic specimens from all over the world. Two of his large paintings of Marrakesh can be seen at the **Musée du Patrimoine Immatériel** (p47) on Djemaa El Fna.

Fondation Majorelle

The non-profit foundation was established in 2001 by Yves Saint Laurent, Pierre Bergé and Madison Cox to safeguard the Jardin Majorelle, Musée Pierre Bergé des Arts Berbères and Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech. It provides training in garden-related subjects and museum curatorial services, finances scholarships, provides grants to cultural and educational institutions and organises scientific and cultural events.

Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech

Get up close and personal to the Mondrian dress, 'le smoking' tuxedo, the safari jacket and much more at this outstanding **museum** (*adult/child Dh130/free, with Jardin Majorelle & Musée Pierre Bergé des Arts Berbères adult/child Dh330/free*). Fifty pieces chosen from the collection are displayed around themes dear to Yves Saint Laurent, offering an original interpretation of the couturier's work and showing off his attraction to the colours of Marrakesh.

MAP P120 G1

Award-Winning Architecture

The first thing you notice on arrival at the museum is the remarkable architecture of the building: the terracotta bricks are locally made in Marrakesh's red ochre colour. These bricks form a lattice-like facade that reflects the warp and weft of threads, and contrasts with the smooth lower facade like lace meeting silk. The curved and straight lines of the building are reminiscent of a drape of fabric. Opened in 2017 in homage to the couturier who so loved Marrakesh, the museum has won awards for its architecture.

Step inside and it's a complete contrast, with a silky smooth finish intended to complement the exterior like the lining of a couture jacket.

The museum was designed by Studio KO and was the brainchild of Yves Saint Laurent's partner Pierre Bergé (1930–2017), who wanted to create a repository of the fashion designer's work that was 'profoundly Moroccan'. To this end, the building was designed without external-facing windows, to emulate Marrakesh's traditional riads.

PLANNING TIP

Combined tickets covering Jardin Majorelle, Musée Pierre Bergé des Arts Berbères and Musée YSL must be bought online at least one day in advance. The Musée YSL is closed on Wednesday.



Scan this code for opening hours and details of temporary exhibitions.



MATTES RENÉ/HEMIS.FR/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



COFFEE BREAK

My Kawa (p139; pictured) on Rue Yves Saint Laurent is the perfect spot for coffee or ice cream after your museum trip and before hitting the trendy shops along this street.

Patios

Like a traditional house of the medina, internal patios are an integral design feature of the museum. The first is a striking circular walk-through that segues between the entrance and internal exhibition spaces. Here a series of stained-glass windows echoes the work of French artist Henri Matisse, who greatly influenced YSL's designs. The second patio forms the heart of the building, a square chamber covered with *zellige* (mosaic tilework) and a giant circular dish that catches the rain. The use of green here is significant, as it's highly prized in both Amazigh and Islamic cultures.

Main Exhibition

Yves Saint Laurent's love affair with Marrakesh began in 1966 – by the end of his first visit, he'd

acquired the deeds to a house in the medina. The Algerian-born French fashion designer (1936–2008) was fascinated by the artistry and colours of Morocco, which continued to inspire him throughout his life.

The core of the museum is the **Yves Saint Laurent Hall**, holding a permanent display of his sketches, rotating haute-couture fashions and colour-themed accessories. The backdrop is entirely black – a key colour in YSL's designs – creating a cavernous cocoon pierced only by audiovisuals of the designer's catwalk shows and recordings of him speaking.

On the right-hand wall, as you enter, the exhibition starts with a biography of Yves Saint Laurent constructed from personal artefacts, including a letter sent by YSL to *French Vogue's*



LIBRARY

A research library of some 6000 books is available to scholars by appointment and contains books on the Amazigh people, Moroccan history, traditional arts, gardens, botany and landscaping.

FAMILANO_PHOTOGRAPHY/SHUTTERSTOCK





SCREENINGS

The 150-seat **Pierre Bergé Auditorium** screens films, hosts recitals and live broadcasts from L'Opéra de Paris, and is a venue for the **Marrakech International Film Festival** every November. Check what's on at the website. In the theatre lobby are Yves Saint Laurent's fashion illustrations for the theatre, cinema, cabaret and ballet productions that he worked on.

editor-in-chief, Michel de Brunhoff, in June 1954 at the age of 17.

Behind the scenes, the collections are painstakingly conserved under state-of-the-art conditions in the basement. The collection is the property of the Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent and is also exhibited at the Musée Yves Saint Laurent in Paris.

More Exhibition Space

Temporary art exhibitions by international artists are mounted in a separate gallery space and change two or three times a year. The subjects are contemporary design, art, fashion, anthropology and botany. Visit the Musée YSL website (museeyslmarrakech.com) to find out what exhibitions are planned here.

Café Le Studio

After wandering the garden and YSL museum, you'll welcome some refreshment. **Café Le Studio** (p137) is modelled on Yves Saint Laurent's workspace at 5 Ave Monceau in Paris and is decorated with some of his fashion sketches. With accents of yellow, it's a light, bright space that spills into a courtyard with plants and a cool blue pool. The chef uses ingredients sourced from the Marrakesh region and produce from the organic farmers market held at the Jardin Majorelle on Saturday mornings. Be sure to book ahead. Note that you can only visit the cafe if you have a ticket for the museum.

Marrakesh Outskirts

Spend a day in the **Palmeraie** (palm groves) to visit the marvellous Water Museum and contemporary art museums set in lush gardens.

Lovers of contemporary design and home decor should head for the industrial zone of **Sidi Ghanem** (sidi-ghanem.com), offering a good overview of Moroccan design.

MAP P120 A1 & G1

Designer Homewares at Sidi Ghanem

About 20 minutes' drive northwest of the city is the industrial quarter of Sidi Ghanem. Unprepossessing it might be, but it does house dozens of interior designers and artists who have large showrooms. Here you'll find contemporary artist Hassan Hajjaj and his quirky teashop, designer LRNCE, and furniture and homewares outlets such as Chabi Chic.

Prices are fixed and credit cards are widely accepted, so it's easier than bargaining in the souqs. Hire a *grand taxi* and expect to spend at least half a day here. You'll find a few cafes to fuel your shopping.

Palmeraie Art Museums

Set in a sprawling Andalusian garden of adobe houses, the **Musée de la Palmeraie** (benchaabane.com/musee_palmeraie; adult/child Dh50/free) displays an outstanding collection of photography, painting and sculpture. Its 20th-century watercolours, drawings, prints and oil paintings, by Marrakchi artists such as Hicham Benohoud, Abderrahim Iqbi and Larbi Cherkaoui, are particularly strong and demonstrate how local artists have been inspired by Moroccan life and Islamic culture.



PLANNING TIP

Hire a *grand taxi* or private driver and expect to spend at least half a day at Sidi Ghanem or the Palmeraie.



SIDI GHANEM MAP

You'll find a useful map of this sprawling area at any of the outlets that shows the numbered location of each one, or check the website (sidi-ghanem.com).



CELIACHEN/SHUTTERSTOCK

FREE-WHEELING

Explore the outskirts under your own steam with **Marrakech Green Wheels** (marrakechgreenwheels.com), which offers cycling tours, or try a vintage motorbike and sidecar with **Insiders Experience** (insidersexperience.com).

Farid Belkahia (1934–2014) was one of the most well-known figures in 20th-century Moroccan art. The **Musée Farid Belkahia** (fondationfaridbelkahia.com; adult/child Dh50/30), housed in the artist's old villa, exhibits a selection of his work, including some of the multimedia pieces that he was known for. To get here, follow the signs from Musée de la Palmeraie.

At the lush Al Maaden Golf Resort, 6km southeast of Marrakesh, is the sleek, private, non-profit **Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden** (macaal.org; adult/child Dh70/free) promoting African art through exhibitions, residencies and education programmes. The building is set in a monumental sculpture park.

Water Museum

To give it its full title, the **Musée Mohammed VI pour la Civilisation de l'Eau au Maroc** (watermuseums.net/network/museum-of-the-water-civilization-in-morocco-mohammed-vi; adult/child Dh45/10) is a splendid museum worth half a day to visit, given that water is in such short supply in Morocco. It manages to combine science, history and geography into a fun experience in beautiful surroundings.

The museum is part of UNESCO's Water Museums Global Network. There are pools and fountains at the entrance, and a large wooden *noria*, or waterwheel, as found in Fez.

Surrounding the museum is a 3-hectare park dedicated to restoring the palm groves.



QUICK BREAK

While Sidi Ghanem has a few cafes, there's nothing much on offer at the museums, so it's best to bring your own refreshments.

PARKERSPICS/SHUTTERSTOCK

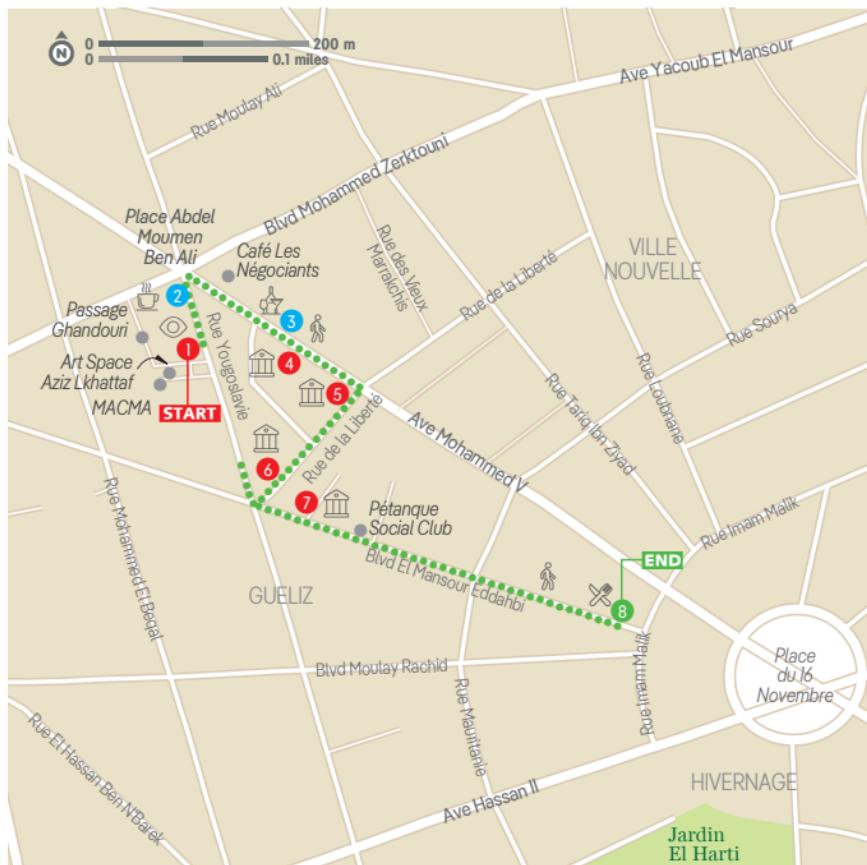




Walk Gueliz & Ville Nouvelle

Discover the art galleries and old art deco buildings of the Ville Nouvelle with this pleasant saunter through Gueliz. Feast your eyes upon these last remaining art deco relics before they, too, are torn down. Comptoir des Mines is a particular gem. This vibrant area buzzes with contemporary arts, shops and excellent restaurants.

START	END	LENGTH
Passage Ghandouri, Rue Yougoslavie	Grand Café de la Poste, Gueliz	850m; 30 minutes



1 Gallery Mini-Mall

Enter **Passage Ghandouri** (p136) on Rue Yougoslavie, to visit Art Space Aziz Lkhattaf, Matisse Art Gallery, MACMA and other galleries in this arty mall. In addition to a photographic record of Moroccan life, MACMA also contains works formerly at the Orientalist Museum, now closed.

2 Art Deco Cafés

Exiting the passage, walk north for 150m to the roundabout where gracious old art deco buildings come into view: **Café Atlas** (p139) is on your left and Café Les Négociants on your right.

3 Secret Speakeasy

From Café Atlas, take the first right into Ave Mohammed V. After 130m you will see Hôtel Nassim on your right. It's not remarkable from the outside, but on the 1st floor, the **Chesterfield Pub** is a picture-perfect 1930s bar with walnut panelling and stepped cubist design features.

4 Contemporary Photography

Just 30m on, climb the once-grand staircase to **Gallery 127** on the 1st floor, an art deco apartment that's now an industrial-chic art space showing contemporary photography.

5 Artist-Owned Gallery

Exiting the gallery, continue southeast 60m to the corner and turn right into Rue de la Liberté, where you'll see **Habib Kibari Gallery**.

6 Art Deco Gem

Continue along this street for 160m to the corner and turn right into Rue Yougoslavie. **Comptoir des Mines Galerie** (p136) commands the corner in an art deco building featuring art from across Africa. This building has graceful art deco details such as terrazzo floors, wooden doors and superb light fittings. Look out for Majaz, a programme supporting emerging artists in the creation of their first solo exhibition.

7 Contemporary Artists

Walk southeast down Blvd El Mansour Eddahbi for 70m to **Loft Art Gallery**. Just after Loft is the French-era boules club, now a restaurant, Pétanque Social Club, (p137) secreted behind a distressed blue door on your left.

8 Grand Old Dame

Continue in the same direction for 300m then turn left at the junction, and **Grand Café de la Poste** (p138) is on your left. It's a superb example of 1920s art deco architecture and interior. Now you deserve lunch and a glass of wine.

EXPERIENCES

See African Art at Comptoir des Mines Galerie

ART GALLERY

(MAP: ① P120 C4)

The work of several modern Moroccan artists is exhibited throughout the three floors of this 1932 building, **Comptoir des Mines Galerie** (cmgmarrakech.com). The gallery aims to support emerging artists, and large installations are set up in the adjacent Hangar. The gallery, on a prominent corner site, was once the headquarters of a mining company and is worth a visit on its own to see its spectacular art deco terrazzo floors, doors, wall sconces and pendants.

Browse the Artful Shopping Mall of Passage Ghandouri

ART GALLERY

Birds of a feather flock together in this small shopping centre full of galleries, **Passage Ghandouri** (MAP: ② P120 G5) off Rue Yougoslavie. **Yahya** (yahya-group.com) showcases superbly crafted lighting, furniture, architectural elements and art that can be found in palaces, homes and offices all over the world. Aziz Lkhattaf exhibits his colourful contemporary work at **Art Space** ([@azizlkhattaf](http://azizlkhattaf)). **Matisse Art Gallery** (MAP: ③ P120 H5; [@matisse_gallery](http://matisse_gallery)), one of the oldest galleries in Marrakesh, has contemporary Moroccan paintings, mixed media and sculpture. Drop in at top fashion designer **Fadila El Gadi** (fadilaelgadi.com) for the ultimate Moroccan outfit. At the end of the passage, you'll find the private **MACMA** (*Musée d'Art et de Culture de Marrakech*; MAP: ④ P120 H5; museemacma.com; adult/child Dh150/

free). It houses a permanent photographic exhibition, a large Orientalist collection (from the former Orientalist Museum in the medina), and temporary exhibitions.

The Passage leads through to Rue Mohamed El Beqal and the excellent restaurants **Farmers** (P137) and **+61** (P137). En route through the Passage you'll come across **Blue Ribbon** (P138) and **Booklore** (booklore.ma).

Create Your Own Art

ART COURSES

The medina doesn't hold all the cards when it comes to creative courses. At **ArtEscape Marrakech** (MAP: ⑤ P120 H1; artescapemarrakech.com; 2-4hr incl transport Dh300-700), Seleena and Abdul organise exciting art courses just north of the medina. Spend a morning or afternoon trying your hand at *zouak* (traditional painting), leatherwork, *zellige* making, cooking, ceramics, metalwork, calligraphy, weaving or even making your own leather *babouches* (slippers). Each workshop is led by a skilled artisan. Transport is provided.

Palmetto Architecture & Coffee

(MAP: ⑥ P120 B3; [@palmettocooffee](http://palmettocooffee) marrakech; 3hr from Dh200) offers some interesting courses. Weekly three-hour workshops are held on Wednesday and Saturday for up to 10 people in painting on canvas, pottery, tote-bag painting, embroidery, bakery and even facial yoga. Attached to an architectural practice, it serves a range of good coffees, smoothie bowls and delicious homemade cookies (try the Belgian chocolate).



See p120 for map
of locations

Best Places for...

€ Budget €€ Midrange €€€ Top End



Eating

Top-End Restaurants

Farmers €€€

7 G6

This menu sings with produce straight from a local permaculture farm. Chef Driss Aloui conjures up superb seasonal fare served with organic and natural wines. farmersmarrakech.com; noon-3pm & 7-11pm Tue-Sat

Sahbi Sahbi €€€

8 B4

Excellent Moroccan dishes and polished service from the all-female crew in a stunning setting designed by Studio KO. sahbisahbi.com; 7pm-lam Tue-Sun

+61 €€€

9 G5

Fresh innovative dishes perfect for sharing and good wines in a laid-back, conservatory-like space with smiley service. plus61.com; noon-4pm & 7-10pm Mon-Sat

Eat in Garden Surroundings

Amal Center €€

10 C2

Non-profit association empowering disadvantaged women, producing delicious traditional fare in a lovely, leafy garden. amalnonprofit.org; noon-3.30pm Mon-Sat

Pétanque Social Club €€

11 C4

This 1920s-era former pétanque club has a large tree-filled garden that's a wonderful spot for a drink. The clubhouse features room after room, each one artfully decorated. The menu is local but Mediterranean-inspired. There's no sign outside: it's opposite Résidence Ghalia. pscmarakech.com; 8am-lam Sun-Thu, to 2am Fri & Sat

Café Le Studio €€€

12 G1

Modelled on YSL's design studio in Paris, this restaurant is inside the museum. Once you've had your fill of gorgeous clothes, find

a yellow chair in the outside courtyard with its reflecting pool and mull over the seasonal menu. museeyslmarrakech.com; 10am-6pm Thu-Tue

People Pleasers

Cantine

Mouton Noir €€

13 B3

Chef Aniss Meski serves up weekend brunches and big slabs of beef, burgers and a focaccia sandwich in a white-tiled room. No reservations. mouton.noir.marrakech.com; noon-6pm Sun-Wed, to 11pm Thu-Sat

Mizaan €€€

14 F6

Sister to L'Mida in the medina, Mizaan's large terrace makes a wonderful place for apéros and there's a menu of sharing platters that blend Moroccan flavours with the Mediterranean. mizaan-marrakech.com; noon-midnight Sun-Wed, to lam Thu-Sat

Snack Al Bahriya €

15 C5

On a prominent Gueliz corner, this place heaves

all the hours it's open. Choose your fish and seafood from a big display, and munch on complimentary bread, olives, lentils and marinated aubergine while you wait for it to be cooked. *noon-2am*



Drinking

Cocktail Bars

Le Kilim

16 D4

One of Kamal Laftimi's many restaurants across the city, Le Kilim has great cocktails and a small menu of simple dishes like a falafel sandwich, chicken wings and burgers. Inside it's very red and a bit echoey, but the garden is pleasant. *lekilim.com; 9am-midnight*

68 Bar à Vin

17 D3

A hip and ultra-lively little wine bar that packs in a nice mixed crowd of Moroccans and foreign residents. There are both European and Moroccan wines on offer, as well as beer. *@68baravinmarrakech; 6pm-2am Mon-Sat*

Barometre Marrakech

18 B3

Barometre is an experimental cocktail bar that wouldn't look out of place in Paris or New York. Try a house special: Marrakesh Market with whisky, cinnamon, orange and saffron, or a Moorish Coffee with honey, cinnamon and nutmeg. *lebarometre.net; 6.30pm-lam Mon-Sat*

Grand Café de la Poste

19 D5

Restored to its flapper-era glory, this landmark bistro oozes colonial decadence. Come for *apéros* and free snacks to enjoy the old-world ambience of dark wood, fans and potted palms. *grandcafedelaposte.restaurant; 8am-lam*

More than Coffee

Thirty5ive

20 F4

Specialists in Arabica coffees, roasted in Amsterdam, as well as filter coffees. There are also frappuccinos, loose-leaf teas and a house lemonade. An art gallery and carefully curated music complete the scene. *thirty5ive.com; 10am-7pm Wed-Mon*

Palmetto Architecture & Coffee

see **6 B3**

An innovative combination, this bright, contemporary coffee shop not only serves excellent coffee and delicious homemade goodies (try the Belgian chocolate cookie), but also offers craft courses such as embroidery and painting on canvas. *@palmetto_coffeemarrakech; 9am-7.30pm*

Blue Ribbon

21 G5

Part of the Farmers stable, Blue Ribbon is perfect for brunch, or coffee and a sandwich. It's located next to Farmers, and its bookshop, Booklore. *blueribbonmarrakech.com; 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sun*

People-Watching Cafés

Café 16

22 E5

Blonde-wood decor and shaded patio seating on a broad Gueliz square give this cafe a continental feel. Try the ice cream, especially the *corne de gazelle* flavour, which riffs on a traditional Moroccan patisserie. *@16_cafe; 7am-12.45am*

My Kawa**23 G1**

Breezy cafe opposite Jardin Majorelle. The terrace attracts a see-and-be-seen crowd who sip smoothies and eat ice creams. There's a wide lunch menu too. [@mykawa_majorelle](https://www.mykawa_majorelle.com); 8am-8pm

Café Atlas**24 H4**

A seat beneath the cafe's art deco exterior is a great place to watch the world go by in the company of Marrakchi old-timers. It does decent coffee and breakfasts, and if you sit inside, you can order a beer. 8am-midnight

**Shopping****Clothing****33 Rue Majorelle****25 G1**

Concept store housing more than 60 Moroccan designers of clothing, jewellery, handbags and homewares. 33ruemajorelle.com; 9am-7pm

Norya Ayron**26 C3**

Everyone from Sharon Stone to Kate Moss has at least one of these bold-print caftans. norya-ayron.shop; 10.30am-7pm Mon-Sat

Atelier 44**27 D4**

Tiny shop showcasing local designers; stocks clothing and accessories. [@atelier44marrakech](http://atelier44marrakech.com); 10am-8pm Mon-Sat

Lalla**28 B4**

Bags of all sorts, from totes and clutches to purses and carpet bags, plus other accessories. shoplalla.com; 10am-7pm Mon-Sat

Galerie des Tanneurs**29 G2**

Excellent range of soft, top-quality Moroccan leather bags, footwear and clothing for men and women. galeriedestanneurs.com; 10am-7pm Mon-Sat

Sidi Ghanem Homewares**LRNCE****30 E1**

Belgian designer Laurence Leenaert designs distinctive

carpets and blankets with hand-sewn patterns,

locally made clothing and ceramic collections that include vases seemingly inspired by Picasso and Miró. lrnce.com; 2-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat

Beldi Design**31 E4**

Moroccan pierced brass lanterns and lighting, furniture, ceramics and decorative items abound at this store in Sidi Ghanem. sidi-ghanem.com/beldi-design; 9am-6pm Mon-Sat

Chabi Chic**32 G6**

The full range of Chabi Chic's hugely popular tableware and gifts are available here. It has smaller outlets in Rue Yves Saint Laurent and Beldi Country Club. chabi-chic.com; 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat

Maison Sarayan**33 E1**

Choose from beautiful fabrics, furniture and decor items at this enormous outlet in Sidi Ghanem. There's a cafe, too. sidi-ghanem.com/maison-sarayan; 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat

★ WORTH A TRIP

Agafay

Wave goodbye to the Marrakesh medina and unwind in the lunar-like landscape of stony desert framed by spectacular High Atlas peaks. Ride a camel or get a thrill on a quad on a day excursion, come for the evening for a starlit dinner, or overnight in luxurious tents.



GETTING THERE

All Agafay accommodation and excursion options organise transport from Marrakesh. Try **Dunes & Desert Quad Marrakesh** (dunesdesert.com), **Insiders Experience** (insidersexperience.com), **Mountain Bike Morocco** (mtbmorocco.com) or **Marrakech Green Wheels** (marrakechgreenwheels.com).

Action or Relaxation?

Agafay's apparent remoteness and barren, lunar landscape make it perfect for quad biking, dune buggies and camel riding. Note that while quad biking is popular in Morocco's desert landscapes, there is ongoing discussion of the noise pollution and ecological damage it creates.

Camps have sprung up throughout Agafay, providing a sense of adventure alongside accommodation in luxurious, safari-type tents, yurts or geodesic domes. Agafay makes a great break from the frenetic intensity of Marrakesh, offering a taste of desert life without the long journey to the Sahara (a minimum of 450km best done over two days).

Come for the day to enjoy the rides and the landscape, have lunch, relax around the pool or take a yoga class. Some camps have a party atmosphere in the evenings and offer dinner, stargazing and music. To sample all the activities, stay for a night or two in luxurious tents.

How to Choose Your Camp

The camps offer luxurious glamping – tents come tastefully furnished and have a private bathroom and viewing platform. In winter, staff will light your wood-burning stove while you're having



STEVEN KENWORTHY/SHUTTERSTOCK

dinner. On hot summer days, you can cool off in the pool. Dinner is a romantic affair, with candles and live music.

Choose your camp according to what you are looking for: in addition to quad, buggy and camel rides, **White Camel** (thewhitecamel.com) offers astronomy evenings and yoga, **Scarabeo Camp: The Stone Camp** (scarabeocamp.com; pictured) pottery workshops and massage, and **Nkhila Lodge** (nkhilalodge.com) is great for children, with a kiddies menu and family tents or cabins. **Les Roches Noires** (scarabeocamp.com/les-roches-noires) is the most secluded. Binoculars for bird-watching and telescopes for stargazing are available. **La Bohème** (boheme-marrakech.com) has evening parties with dinner, dancing and entertainment.



PLANNING TIP

Avoid the intense summer heat. For the best stargazing, don't come at full moon. Wear a scarf across your face in a buggy or quad to protect against dust.





Marrakesh Toolkit

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Ben Youssef Medersa (p84)

SAATON/SHUTTERSTOCK



Family Travel

Moroccans are inherently family-oriented. They'll scoop up your offspring and feed them sweets, smile indulgently as kids play, and then invite you for Friday couscous. Old-fashioned family values thrive here, and children are viewed as a blessing.

Feeding the Family

Kids with adventurous palates will enjoy a **street-food adventure** (p45), devouring *maâkouda* (fried potato patties), grilled *merguez* (spicy sausage) sandwiches and spicy *babbouche* (snails). Classics like *harira* (a hearty soup), *kefta* (meatball) and egg tajine or plain couscous often please fussier tummies. Less daring eaters will find plenty of familiar favourites, including pizza, pasta and wonderful ice cream.



Getting Around

Petits taxis can only take three people, and baby counts as one; a *grand taxi* might be preferable. The horse-drawn *calèches* make a fun way to get around; pick one up at Arset El Bilk near Djemaa El Fna. Call a tuk tuk (p29) when small legs are tired. Pushchairs are impractical in the medina; bring a backpack or sling.



Admission Fees

Monuments and museums are often free for children, or have much reduced rates.



Medina Outings

Take the kids on palace jaunts, splash in garden fountains, and pause for freshly squeezed juices on cafe rooftops. From 6pm to 8pm is the best time for Djemaa El Fna dance troupes and musicians.



LETTING OFF STEAM

Marrakesh has several green spaces for kids to run around.

Close to Djemaa

El Fna are the

Koutoubia Gardens

(p51), and Cyber Park is northwest of the Koutoubia. They're all free of charge, but keep off the grass!



Avoid the Crowds

Early mornings are quieter in the souqs, meaning less hassle and a better view of craftspeople at work.

Accommodation

Marrakesh offers a huge array of traditional riad-style guesthouses in the medina, from reasonably priced hostels to top-end options.

Where to Stay if You Love...



Being Close to the Action

Djemaa El Fna & Southern Central Souqs

(p39) Not far to walk for fun evenings on the square, good shopping, a handful of museums and accommodation at all price levels.



We Love to Stay
In...

Bab Doukkala & Riad Laârous (p109).

The residential feel of this neighbourhood appeals, along with very smart designer shops and some excellent restaurants.

There are only two museums here, but you can get active with artisanal courses, yoga studios, cooking classes and bicycle hire.



Desert Vistas

Agafay (p140)

Luxurious tents, yurts or lodges clustered around dining tents with daytime camel, quad and buggy rides, stunning landscapes and evening entertainment, 45 minutes from Marrakesh.



Shopping in the Souqs

Mouassine & Central Souqs (p63)

Very touristy area buzzing with souqs and concept stores and a number of museums; this slowly gentrifying area has accommodation at all price levels.



Palaces & History

Kasbah & Mellah (p95)

Busy around the main sights during the day but much quieter at night, with a sprinkling of medium to high-range places to stay.

HOW MUCH FOR A NIGHT IN



Hostel dorm bed
from €16



Boutique midrange
riad from €100



Top-end luxury riad
from €300



Architecture & Museums

Kâat Ben Nahid & Bab

Debbagh (p81) Deep in the medina around the busy Ben Youssef Medersa, there's lots to see here, but fewer places to stay and it's quiet at night.



Food, Drink & Nightlife

Allergies & Intolerances

People with food allergies and intolerances won't have a problem in midrange and high-end restaurants, though allergens are rarely listed on menus. Book online, if possible, when you can list your requirements. Be more vigilant in cheaper cafes and restaurants where concepts such as gluten-free or vegan are not as well known.

HOW TO SAY

I'm allergic to... *'Andee hasaseeya mn...*

peanuts *lkawkaw*

almonds *llouz*

walnuts *lrgaa'*

seafood *lfawakih dyal lbhr*

dairy *lhalib*

gluten *lglutine*

egg *lbeyd*



HOW TO ASK...

Is this gluten-free?

Wash makaynsh
lglutine?

**Are there peanuts/
almonds/walnuts?**

Wash kayn lkawkaw/
llouz/lrgaa'?

**Is there any
vegetarian/vegan
food?**

Wash kayn she makla
nabatiya?

WATER

You will automatically be brought water when you order coffee in a cafe. If it's a glassful, avoid it, as it will be tap water. When you order water with a meal, it will be mineral water and you will be asked if you want sparkling or still.



Alcohol

Most places do not serve alcohol. If they do, the server will bring a drinks menu listing spirits, cocktails and wines. The more upmarket the restaurant, the more French wines will be available. Because most Moroccans do not drink alcohol, there's usually a wide range of mocktails on the menu.

HOW TO...

Pay the Bill

In most restaurants or cafes, you ask the server for the bill and pay them.

Occasionally (for example, at Cafe Clock), you will need to pay at the reception desk.

Credit card You can pay by card in more upmarket places.

Split the bill You can ask to split the bill if necessary.

Tipping If you just have a drink in a cafe, a few dirhams will suffice. In restaurants, a tip is sometimes included, so check the bill. If it's not included, 10% is sufficient. If you pay by card, remember to give the tip in cash; you can't add it to the card payment.



PRICE RANGES

The following price ranges refer to the average cost of a main course:

- € less than Dh70
- €€ Dh70–150
- €€€ over Dh150



OPENING HOURS

Cafes 8am to 10pm

Ville Nouvelle restaurants Noon to 3pm and 7pm to 10pm. Often closed Sunday evening and Monday.

Medina restaurants

11am to 11pm

Djemaa El Fna juice stalls 9am to 11pm



HOW MUCH FOR A



Nus nus coffee

Dh10–15



Fruit juice on Djemaa El Fna

Dh8–12



Bowl of bissara or harira

Dh12



Tajine for one in a canteen

Dh40



Burger in a bistro

Dh100–140



Beer in a bar

Dh40



Cocktail in a hotel

Dh150

Going Out

Club scene

Morocco's premier nightclub, **Theatro**, along with **Babouchka** and **Comptoir** (p136), are all in Hivernage in the Ville Nouvelle. They have resident DJs and hold special events for which you need to book a table. They attract a party crowd from 11.30pm until the small hours of the morning.

Bars in the Ville

Nouvelle Bars in Morocco can be insalubrious, but there are some in the Ville Nouvelle that are worth checking out: **68 Bar à Vin** (p138) and **Barometre Marrakech** (p138) being the best. Aperitifs at **Grand Café de la Poste** (p138) and in the garden at **Pétanque Social Club** (p137) are very pleasant.

Bars in the Medina

Head for cool **Kabana** (p60), the rooftop of **El Fenn** (p77) or **Les Jardins du Lotus** (p116). You can also get a drink at the bar of large medina hotels, such as **Les Jardins de la Koutoubia** (p60), **La Mamounia** (p56) and **Les Jardins de la Medina** (p106).



LGBTIQ+ Travellers

Morocco continues to criminalise same-sex relationships, despite advocacy efforts. Public attitudes remain conservative, and discretion is advised.



Current Situation

Morocco's laws and societal norms pose challenges for LGBTIQ+ travellers, though the country's rich culture and hospitality remain appealing. Attitudes vary – foreign-owned hotels tend to be more welcoming, while some locally run establishments may be far more conservative. Public LGBTIQ+ spaces are scarce, and there are no official Pride events, though discreet communities exist. Be aware that public displays of affection – regardless of orientation – are discouraged. Morocco ranks poorly on global LGBTIQ+ travel indexes, reflecting ongoing legal and social challenges.

Despite its conservative mindset, Morocco can still make an unforgettable trip for LGBTIQ+ travellers. A spirit of tolerance is increasingly the norm. Be mindful of the cultural differences and remember that you are a visitor in someone else's home.

PRIVATE TRAVEL

Best Morocco Travel (bestmoroccotravel.com/gay-morocco-tours) helps travellers navigate Morocco in a comfortable way, offering guidance on cultural etiquette while ensuring a warm welcome.

For a tailored experience, use a specialist agent like **Out Adventures** (outadventures.com).



Resources

Kif Kif (linkr.bio/kifikif) operates from Spain, and has been advocating for LGBTIQ+ rights since 2002. **Inclusive Morocco** (inclusivemorocco.com) is the first travel agency to actively engage with the local LGBTIQ+ community, championing inclusivity and diversity.

Health & Safe Travel

Morocco in general is a safe place to travel, but that doesn't mean you should let your guard down.



TAP WATER

According to standards set by the World Health Organization and the Moroccan Ministry of Health, tap water is considered safe to drink in Marrakesh and other major cities. However, if you're not used to it, it's better to stick to bottled water.



Insurance

Buying travel insurance for medical care and accidents is essential in Morocco. You'll have to pay upfront for emergency healthcare, whether it's an upset tummy or something more serious, so make sure you're covered. Coverage for delays, cancellation, luggage loss and theft is also recommended. Health insurance cards from the UK, EU and USA are not valid.



Bag Snatchers

Wear a bag across your body to avoid snatching by pillion riders in the medina.



Tips for Solo Women Travellers

Dress modestly. Take taxis at night. Eat in places busy with locals or frequented by international residents. Choose accommodation where you can relax and retreat. Seek out female guides. If someone is uncomfortably persistent, do not engage. Stay calm, move away and look around for help; it's never far away.

PHARMACIES

Pharmacies (with a green crescent outside) sell most medications without a prescription. They're a great first port of call if your needs are not too serious.

QUICK INFO



Marijuana

It's illegal to use cannabis recreationally in Morocco.



Heat

Avoid the midday sizzling summer temperatures and stay hydrated.



Healthcare

Clinique Le Marrakech
(cliniquelemarakech.ma) offers emergency healthcare to foreigners.



Responsible Travel

Follow these tips to leave a lighter footprint, support local and have a positive impact on communities.

Overtourism

Bottlenecks of tour groups at Marrakesh's top sights are often poorly managed and put stress on the city's historical heirlooms. Stray off the tourist path and visit some of Marrakesh's excellent, smaller museums and attractions.

Consider an early morning visit to the Jardin Majorelle (pictured) to beat the crowds: it opens at 8.30am. Tickets are only available online for the garden and neighbouring Yves Saint Laurent Museum.



Pedal Power

Hire a bike from **Pikala Bikes** (p114), which trains young people to become professional cycling tour guides and bike mechanics. Or choose **Marrakech Green Wheels** (marrakechgreenwheels.com), which teaches children to ride bikes.



Local Support

Stay in small riads in the medina that employ local people, and buy local goods and services. Buy from women's cooperatives or use the **tuk tuk** (p29) service that employs vulnerable women, those with disabilities and women from rural areas. Have lunch at **Amal Center** (p137) in Gueliz, a non-profit organisation that supports vulnerable women and trains them in restaurant skills.

FROM LEFT: SUWATPATT/SHUTTERSTOCK, ANDRZEJ LISOWSKI TRAVEL/SHUTTERSTOCK

Resources

fm6e.org/en Foundation Mohammed VI for the Protection of the Environment.

highatlasfoundation.org Promotes community-designed initiatives for sustainable agriculture and empowerment.

OUR PICK



Animal Rights

It's better not to support practices such as snake charming and exploitation of monkeys on Djemaa El Fna. Just walk away if you're approached by the handlers.

EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

People are still suffering from the aftermath of the 2023 earthquake. Consider donating to **Education For All** (efamorocco.org), which facilitates education for rural girls, and the **Eve Branson Foundation** (evebransonfoundation.org.uk), which is rebuilding damaged schools.



Giving Back

The best responsible choices include **Moroccan Food Adventures** (moroccanfoodadventures.com), which supports local families and industries, such as the Marrakech Artisan Day; **Al Nou** (alnour-textiles.com), a women's cooperative run by local, physically challenged women offering textiles and homewares; or women's organic-certified argan

cooperative **Assouss Argane** (p78). Enjoy a concert at **Cafe Clock** (cafeclock.com) to support local musicians and community projects; eat at **World Storytelling Café** (worldstorytellingcafe.com) to help save the precarious art of storytelling; and buy a souvenir at **Centre de la Femme Artisane** (p79) to support these women artisans.



MULES & DONKEYS

Non-profit **Jarjeer Mule & Donkey Refuge** (jarjeer.org) is just south of the city, where the baby donkeys are especially appealing. **Scan this QR code to find out how to visit.**



Climate Change & Travel

It's impossible to ignore the impact we have when travelling; Lonely Planet urges all travellers to engage with their travel carbon footprint, which will mainly come from air travel. While there often isn't an alternative, travellers can look to minimise the number of flights they take, opt for newer aircrafts and use cleaner ground transport, such as trains. One proposed solution – purchasing carbon offsets – unfortunately does not cancel out the impact of individual flights. While most destinations will depend on air travel for the foreseeable future, for now, pursuing ground-based travel where possible is the best course of action.

The **UN Carbon Offset Calculator** shows how flying impacts a household's emissions.

The **ICAO's carbon emissions calculator** allows visitors to analyse the CO₂ generated by point-to-point journeys.





Accessible Travel

Accessible Morocco

 Accessibility remains something of a work in progress. The medieval medina and riads riddled with staircases pose challenges for those with mobility issues, though modern hotels are generally fairly well equipped. Infrastructure for visually and hearing-impaired travellers is also limited, and solo female travellers may attract curiosity/unwanted attention.

City Transport

 Buses and taxis are not wheelchair accessible, though a *grand taxi* does offer more space. **Tuk Tuk Marrakech** (p29) is a useful option to get to and from destinations deep in the medina. Drivers carry a step to make getting in and out easier.



ACCOMMODATION

Many Ville Nouvelle hotels have adapted rooms, lifts to upper floors and restaurants at ground level. Staying in a medina riad might be possible if it has flat access points and rooms around the courtyard.



Marrakesh Magic

Marrakesh is mostly flat, making it easy to roam the medina and access the city's must-visit sights, such as the Saadian Tombs, Bahia Palace and Ben Youssef Medersa.

CAFES WITH A VIEW

Both the **Argana Café** (p59) and **L'Adresse** (p60) on Djemaa El Fna have lifts to their lofty rooftops, so you can watch the evening action on the square without climbing the stairs.

Resources

Morocco Accessible Travel (moroccoaccessibletravel.com) offers tours and hires wheelchairs and mobility aids. **Handi Oasis** (handioasis.com) is a guesthouse south of Marrakesh with fully equipped facilities.

OUR PICK



The **Jardin Majorelle** (p122) and adjacent **Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech** (p127) are both step-free throughout and have toilets designed for wheelchair users.

In the garden, the pathways are concrete and the cafe and shop are easy to navigate.

The **Musée Pierre Bergé des Arts Berbères** (p124) has

ramps throughout and handrails. The main exhibition space at the YSL Museum has fairly dim lighting to protect the fabrics, so might be more difficult for partially sighted visitors.

The auditorium has wheelchair-accessible space.

Nuts & Bolts



Opening Hours

Marrakesh follows the Monday to Friday working week for business purposes. In the medina many shops take Friday (day of prayer) off, or have an extended lunch break. Opening hours differ during Ramadan.

Banks 8.30am–6.30pm Monday to Friday

Bars 6pm until late

Government offices

8.30am–6.30pm Monday to Friday

Post offices

8.30am–4.30pm Monday to Friday

Restaurants noon–3pm and 7–10pm

Shops 10am–7pm Monday to Saturday

Open
Ouvert
Closed
Fermé



Smoking

Smoking and vaping are very common in Morocco. Nearly 25% of men smoke, and young men and women in cool Marrakesh and Casablanca hangouts are likely to be puffing away. Smoking inside many bars and restaurants is still allowed, but is banned in taxis and on public transport.

ELECTRICITY

220V/50Hz



Type C
220V/50Hz



Type E
220V/50Hz



Public Holidays

Banks, post offices and most shops close on the main public holidays, but transport still runs. Religious holidays vary every year depending on the Hegira calendar.

New Year's Day 1 January

Independence Manifesto
11 January

Labour Day 1 May

Throne Day 30 July

Allegiance Day 14 August

Revolution Day 20 August

Young People's Day 21 August

Anniversary of the Green March 6 November

Independence Day 18 November

QUICK INFO

Time zone GMT/
UTC plus one hour
(Ramadan: UTC)

City calling code
0524

Emergency numbers Police 190;
medical 150

Population (2025)
1.6 million



Language

Moroccan Arabic Basics

Hello.

As salaamu
alaykum. (polite)
Salaam. (peace)
Wa alaykum
ssalaam. (response)

Goodbye.

Bsslaama/ma'a
ssalaam.

Yes/No

Eeyeh/La

Please.

'Afak.

Thank you.

Shukran.

You're welcome.
La shukran 'ala
waajb.

Excuse me.

Smahleeya/
Smaheleeya/
Smahuleeya.
(said to m/f/pl)

Fast Phrases

What's your name?

Shno smeetek?

My name is ...

Smeetee ...

Do you speak English?

Washkt'hdar bilengleezeeya?

I didn't understand.

Mafhemtsh.

Where's the ...?

airport

bus station

bus stop

train station

Feen kayn ...?

lmataar

lmhetta dyal tobeesat

lblasa dyal tobeesat

lagaar

What's the address?

Shno l'unwan?

Please write down the address.

Kteb l'unwan 'afak.

Please show me on the map.

'Afak, werrini fi lkhrita.

What do you recommend?

Shno ktqtaarh?

Cheers!

Bsaha!

Response

Alla y'atik saha

This is delicious!

Had she beneen bizaf!

Numbers

1

wahed

2

jooj

3

tlata

4

reb'a

5

khamsa

GOOD TO KNOW

 The main language in Morocco is Arabic, which is used throughout the country. The standardized version of Tamazight is codified by the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture. The main dialects are spoken in the Sous region, the Atlas and Rif Mountains and the surroundings of northern Morocco. French is still regularly used in the cities.

There are three main dialects among Tamazight speakers, which in a certain sense also serve as loose lines of regional demarcation.



Time

What time is it?	Shal fessa'a?
morning	sbah
afternoon	'asheeya
night	lil/lila
yesterday	lbareh
today	lyoom
tomorrow	ghedda



Emergencies

Help!	'Atqnee!
Go away	Seer/Seeroo! (s/pl)
I'm ill.	Ana mreed/ mreeda (m/f)
Call a doctor	'Ayyet 'ala she tbeeb!
Call the police	Ayyet 'ala lbulees!

DARIJA

Moroccan Arabic (Moroccan Darija) is a descendant of both classical and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) that has undergone a lot of linguistic change due to the free borrowing and loan blends from several languages, especially French. This is the everyday spoken language you'll hear when in Morocco. Here, we've represented the Moroccan Darija phrases with the Roman alphabet using a simplified pronunciation system.

TAMAZIGHT GLOSSARY

Hello. La bes darik/
darim (m/f).

Hello (response).
La bes.

Goodbye. Akayaoon
arbee.

See you later.
Akranwes daghr.

Please. Barakalaufik.

Thank you.
Barakalaufik.

Yes. Yah.
No. Oho.

Excuse me. Samhiy.
How are you?

Meneek antgeet?

Fine, thank you. La
bes, lhamdulah.

Good. Eefulkee/
eeshwa.

Bad. (Khaib)
eeghshne.

Food. Teeremt.

**Somewhere to
sleep.** Kra lblast
mahengane.

Water. Arman.

6

setta

7

seb'a

8

tmenya

9

tes'ood

10

'ashra

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