

## Title:

Morocco the most fascinating country

## Word Count:

875

## Summary:

Fascinated by the intensity and beauty of its magic locations or inspired by the contrast of colours, artist that came to discover Morocco, for a few days or for a lifetime, have been unable to resist its power of attraction that is profoundly captivating.

## Keywords:

morocco,travels,tourism

## Article Body:

At a crossroads between two continents and two cultures, Morocco reveals itself to artists as an artistic or personal experience conducive to introspection. During one of his travels Jacques Majorelle wrote, "There are scenes of such realism that one forgets one's time and let's oneself go at living in the Middle Ages".

Morocco deserves better than a simple trip to discover its variety and splendour. The following are must sees for those who have little time available or who wish to visit the main attractions.

The Mountain Ranges and passes of Morocco are particularly attractive for their contrast in nature and diversity. The diversity of the land makes it possible to adopt an approach, according to the season, that corresponds to everyone's capacity. Toubkal (4165m) is the highest summit in Northern Africa and its ascent remains by far the most appreciated. The ochre or bluish massifs of the Anti-Atlas offer the most unusual scenery and have been recently discovered by western trekkers. Possibilities for treks include: Mule-back, mountain bike, or camel expeditions with overnight stays in a mountain hut or bivouac depending on the route and the season.

The north-east trade winds that blow on the Atlantic coast offer highly appreciated spots for surfers. Essaouira is the most well known but there are also Mehdia, Taghazout, Minleft and Sidi Bouzid. Along the coast, you will appreciate the slow, friendly pace of coastal life combined with the excitement of water sports. Windsurfers will enjoy Essaouira and the Dar Bouzza Beach south of Casablanca. And recently, Kite Surfing has gained popularity in these sleepy yet charming towns. Skiing the Atlas of Oukaimden (75km from Marrakesh). For passionate skiers, what could be more thrilling than skiing in Africa! The

Oukaimden winter ski resort is located at an altitude of 2,600m and is open from January to April. It offers ski runs for all levels in an area of 300 hectares. The Michliffen ski resort near Ifrane is of more modest proportions, but still offers a great experience in the Atlas Mountains. Outside the snow season, Oukaimden offers hand gliding, rock climbing or trekking.

Morocco is renowned for its beautiful golf courses where regular international tournaments are organised. For amateurs, it is an occasion to combine sport and discovery all year long. With the backdrop of the Atlas Mountains and surrounded by Palm Trees, the serenity of the landscape serve to calm the nerves after that occasional miss hit!

A stroll in the maze of the souks (shops and merchant stalls) can sometimes prove to be a challenge but getting lost in them is a pleasure. Try to barter if you want to do some shopping. It is a well-rooted tradition in the Arab countries but may turn into a nightmare if you are unaware of the usual prices. A preliminary visit to a cooperative or good advice of a local will prove useful to avoid being taken for a fool.

Music is folklore but also tradition and has undergone various influences (Andalousian, African or rural). Music is omnipresent at celebrations and ceremonies but also in the street. Let yourself get under the spell of poetry or jerking the rythm of music that can be enjoyed at festivals (see agenda), parties and in public squares.

The richness of the Moroccan cuisine, reputed to be one of the best in the world, is a sheer joy of the senses. The multiple ingredients of the tagines and the sweetness of the cakes are staples of the Moroccan cuisine that never lacks creativity.

One can enjoy small restaurants and famous tables with a wide range of prices. Places that attract too many tourists are to be avoided for they may leave you with an insipid souvenir of Moroccan cuisine.

Morocco is a land of mountains. It's high-level grounds cover more than 100.000 km<sup>2</sup> and include a dozen summits exceeding 4000 meters. In the south, the mountains give way to the great Sahara Desert, which stretches until sub-Saharan Africa. Mule tracks are often the only link between the Berber villages, which lay hidden in the valleys, or between the settlements in each oasis. The only way to visit these regions and to learn about the proud and welcoming population, which has kept its ancestral traditions, is by Land Rover and by foot.

Thanks to their wide variety of products, qualified travel agencies like 1st A Travels Agency ( <http://www.1statravels.com> ) have signed contracts with nearly all 3 / 4, and 5 stars category hotels in mager cities of Morocco. In Marrakech, Casablanca, Fez, Tangier and Agadir. They also hold considerable allotments in different hotels, which are distributed amongst their clients.

Reserving your stop over in these beautiful traditional houses (riads, dars or

kasbahs) which, from the simplest to the most luxurious, offer service of the highest quality, will enable you to experience the true Moroccan culture. Most riads are situated in the old medinas, where behind an unattractive outside wall, an oasis of rest unfolds itself as soon as you pass the threshold: interior gardens and patio's with water cascading from the fountains. Each room or suit has its own style and no two are alike. Most riads have only a few rooms and suites, where the host himself takes care of the well being of each client.