


Morocco Factsheet

Currency	Dirham	Divided into 100 centimes; not available outside Morocco
Time	GMT	There is no time difference between Morocco and UK (GMT)
Language	Moroccan Arabic	Most Moroccans also speak French
Electricity	220v	220v Round pin plugs 

PASSPORT & VISA

A valid ten-year passport is essential; it should be valid for at least six months after arrival in the country – check the FCO’s advice on entry requirements for Morocco to be sure: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. No visa is currently required for British passport-holders, but please check current visa requirements on our website (<https://www.discoveradventure.com/essential-information#/get-your-visa>) and ensure you allow plenty of time. Remember to check any regulations for countries you may transit during your flight.

MONEY

Dirhams can only be obtained in Morocco as it is a closed currency. Sterling or US dollar cash and travellers cheques are easy to exchange in the main towns. Scottish currency is not. Away from the main towns changing money will be difficult and there is little to spend it on, so travellers cheques are really only useful if you are planning to extend your stay. Some credit cards are accepted in larger restaurants, hotels and the occasional shop in the souks. Cash can be withdrawn from ATMs in main cities.

HEALTH:

Vaccinations

We recommend you ensure your routine UK schedule of vaccinations is up-to-date (especially Tetanus) and check the Fit For Travel (<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk>) website for further details. You should always check with your GP/travel clinic for the latest health advice, as they are made immediately aware of any updates in World Health Travel requirements.

Malaria & Insect Bites

In this part of Morocco you are not in a malaria risk area. Please check with your doctor if you are in doubt about other areas. Cover up at dawn and dusk in loose-fitting clothing, use a good insect repellent and avoid wearing strongly perfumed toiletries – there will still be biting insects even if they do not carry malaria.

General

On the trip itself, food is cooked and prepared to very high standards and you can eat with confidence – though adopt good hand-washing procedures to prevent bugs being passed around the group. Elsewhere, be aware of the following general precautions: Do not drink tap water – or clean your teeth in it – and avoid ice cubes in drinks unless you are sure they are made with bottled water. For the same reason avoid salads, raw vegetables and fruit that you cannot peel yourself, as well as unpasteurised dairy products and ice cream. Do not eat a meal if you think it has not been freshly cooked.

There is always a risk of sunstroke and dehydration on a trip of this nature if you are not careful. Drink lots of water, replenish your salt intake and protect yourself against the sun: use high factor sun cream or sun block, wear a hat and sunglasses. The key point for good health is to keep your resistance high – eat and drink well – and to be fully aware of all possible health risks such as poor hygiene, undressed open cuts, untreated water and bites.

WEATHER

Morocco is a very diverse country in landscape and as a result, climate differs regionally. In the south, including the desert, summer is unbearably hot and winter nights cold, though day temperatures can still reach upwards of 25°C. Mountain peaks in both the Rif and Atlas mountains are snow-capped for the majority of the year but in the summer the days are still pleasantly warm. In the coastal areas the climate is more moderate, though more rain falls in the winter.

Climate Chart for Marrakech:

	Feb	Mar	May	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rainfall in mm	28	33	15	23	31	31
Max temp °C	20	23	29	28	23	19
Min temp °C	6	9	14	14	9	6

SAFETY & SECURITY

Theft is no more common in Morocco than in most European countries, but you should still be on your guard, especially in the cities. Use your common sense: wear a concealed moneybelt containing your passport, flight ticket and cash, and do not flash any valuables, including your watch and camera. Leave your valuables behind; you don’t need your best jewellery and gadgets on this

trip. Be careful at night and avoid walking or getting into taxis alone. Crowded areas such as bus stations and markets attract pick-pockets and bag-slashers, so be vigilant for both yourself and your companions.

LANGUAGE

Moroccan Arabic is the official language of Morocco and is the mother tongue of about 60% of the nation. Most Moroccans also speak French, the legacy of about 50 years of colonial occupation. Berbers make up a large part of the population and Berber languages (there are roughly 300 regional dialects) are widely spoken, though most speak Arabic and often French as well. Spanish is still spoken as a second language by many residents in northern cities such as Tangier.

Having a few basic phrases up your sleeve will go a long way in forming good relationships with the people you meet, and having some fun interaction! Here are a few examples to get you started:

Hello / how are you	- As-salam aleykum	Goodbye - Beslama	
Yes/No	- Naam/La	Please - Aafak	
Thankyou	- Shukran	Sorry - Smahliya	
Praise be to God	- Al hamdu lillah	If God wishes - (used in many contexts) - Inshallah	
How much?	- bshal	I don't understand - La afham	
1 - wahid	5 - khumsah	9 - tissaa	100 - miyya
2 - itnain	6 - settah	10 - asharah	1000 - alf
3 - thalatha	7 - sabaa	20 - ishrin	
4 - arba	8 - thamaaneeya	50 - khamseen	

FOOD AND DRINK

The two most well-known dishes in Morocco are couscous and tajine. Couscous is a mound of steamed semolina with vegetables and meat, usually chicken or mutton. Tajine is a delicious traditional Berber stew cooked slowly in a pot over a charcoal fire. Salads, soups and kebabs are also common dishes. Native fruits are diverse and include grapes, strawberries, melons, prickly pear, or cactus fruit and of course figs and dates. Tea is the national drink, in particular green tea, which is flavoured with sprigs of mint and very refreshing on a hot day. Alcohol has a very low profile in Morocco as in most Islamic countries, wine and beer are produced.

CULTURE & PEOPLE:

Religion

The main religion is Islam with the majority being Sunni Moslems. Most Berbers are at least nominally Muslim although many retain traces of an ancient animist belief in their practice of Islam.

Dress

Remember that what you would wear on a hot day in the UK is not necessarily acceptable in other countries, particularly in Muslim regions. At Discover Adventure we expect our groups to be sensitive to other cultures – remember that even in the most remote locations, we have local crew with us and they also deserve your respect. Women travellers in particular should be modest in dress - avoid tight or 'strappy' tops in favour of regular T-shirts. Shorts should not be too short and loose trousers are preferable in rural areas. Men should wear a top at all times. By dressing thoughtfully you not only experience minimum hassle but do not offend the local people. Those extending their stay, especially women, should dress in order to draw as little attention to themselves as possible.

Haggling

It is expected in most situations in Morocco that you will haggle for prices. You are not ripping locals off if you knock their prices down, but you can damage the structure of local customs and economy if you do not. Haggling is also great fun and a good way of interacting with local people. A good rule of thumb is to offer a third of the asking price and meet somewhere in the middle. However, while the intention is to knock the price down, remember that a dollar means a lot more to the seller than it will to you once you get home.

Tipping

A tip of 10 - 15% is expected in the more expensive bars and restaurants. Most services are performed with the aim of getting a few dirham, but aggressive hustling shouldn't be rewarded.

RECOMMENDED READING:

Travel Guides (useful if extending your stay)

- Morocco – Lonely Planet
- A Rough Guide to Morocco
- Moroccan Arabic Phrasebook – Lonely Planet

Fiction / Autobiography

- A Year in Marrakech – Peter Mayne
- A Handful of Honey – Annie Hawes
- Quest for the Kasbah – Richard Bangs
- Sahara: The Life of the Great Desert – De Villiers & Hirtle
- Zohra's Ladder – Pamela Windo
- The Sword and the Cross – Fergus Fleming