

Morocco

destination FACTSHEET

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TOP 5 THINGS TO KNOW

1

Morocco is a diverse, multilingual country. Moroccans speak a mixture of Arabic, Berber, English, and French. In the larger cities, English and French are widely spoken. In the more rural areas, you will hear a mix of Arabic and Berber.

2

Morocco is very tolerant and welcoming to visitors; while you're not expected to act or look like a Moroccan. Loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts, long skirts, or lightweight pants are good choices for women, as well as a scarf and loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts, and lightweight pants are good choices for men.

3

The weather in Morocco is very hot and dry all year round, with June-August being the hottest months. Don't forget to pack your hat, sunscreen, water bottle, and long, loose-fitting clothing to keep the sun off your skin.

4

We recommend you visit a local travel doctor or your primary care physician with your itinerary to get the best personalized medical advice on any vaccinations or special medication needed for the program.

You can also check with the Department of Health and Human Services for specific health concerns when traveling: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

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It is prohibited to take pictures of police, soldiers, and military installations. If you are taking photos of people, please ask them first. Some people, such as performers and snake charmers, will ask you for a tip if you take their picture. About 5 or 10dhs is the usual tip in these cases.



ACIS TRIP SERVICES

Hotels:

ACIS typically uses perfectly located, three or four-star Western style hotels.

Rooming

Rooming is based on twins/doubles.

Meals







Breakfast and Dinner will be included unless otherwise stated on your itinerary. Lunch may be included on some days; you can check your itinerary for further details.

Tour Manager

Your ACIS Tour Manager will provide you with insight and commentary on the local environment, history, and culture during the trip. The ACIS Tour Manager will be available to the group during the entire trip, including aboard the cruise ship, and will also make themselves available to the group in the evenings and during free time.



GENERAL INFORMATION/TRAVEL TIPS

Flights 	Most flights to Morocco from the United States are overnight flights and passengers usually arrive the following day.
Passport Requirements 	Passports are required for all passengers traveling to Morocco and must be valid for at least 6 months after returning to the USA and have at least two blank pages. Tourist visas are not required for US citizens traveling to Morocco. Non-US citizens should check with the Embassy of Morocco for any specific Visa requirements. In such cases, the passenger will be responsible for obtaining their own Visa. Please make two colored copies of your passport. One for the group leader and one to keep in a location separate from your passport.
Parental Consent (if necessary) 	No parental consent is needed to travel to Morocco.
Time Difference 	Morocco is five hours ahead of the Eastern Time Zone.
Luggage Restrictions 	Identification tags should be on all luggage, even carry-ons, and all other tags should be removed at each destination hotel, so that bags won't get misdirected as you travel to Morocco. Take medicines, vanity kit and emergency clothing in your carry-on, in case your luggage is misplaced en route or tardy getting to your hotel room.
Tipping 	Pre-paid tipping will be listed on your account to cover tour manager, local bus and guide. All meals included in the itinerary also include gratuity, so it is NOT necessary to leave an additional tip at meals. Tipping is customary in Morocco but remains up to your discretion according to how well you have been served. In restaurants and bars, it is custom to tip around 10%.

Electrical outlets



The electrical output in Morocco is 220 volts and sockets are of the European two pin variety. Your hotel reception will be able to supply adaptors if needed. Please do not tamper with any fixtures or fittings and report any faults to the reception immediately.



WHAT TO PACK

It is quite hot in the summer, so you will need light clothes. In winter, a coat or jacket will be needed in the evening. Comfortable shoes are a must. In the city centers, in mosques and churches clothes that are more conservative should be worn.

- ✓ **Sun gear** – hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, water
- ✓ Scarf/shawl and long skirt/pants to cover up for religious sites.
- ✓ Purell and tissues
- ✓ Basic Medical Supplies such as anti-diarrhea medicine, aspirin, Band-Aids.
- ✓ A small bag to carry around water, sunscreen, lip balm, etc.
- ✓ A bathing suit
- ✓ Games, it's good to have a deck of cards or another game to play during down time.
- ✓ Comfortable walking shoes
- ✓ A warm jacket, if traveling during the wintertime (Dec-Mar)
- ✓ Multi-layer clothing, as temperature can intensely vary between night and day



HEALTHCARE

Visit a local travel doctor or your primary care physician with your itinerary to get the best personalized medical advice on any vaccinations or special medication needed for the program.

In the event of a medical emergency where medical expenses and/or insurance is involved, the passenger must pay the expenses directly and mail receipts to our Boston office for reimbursement. Deductible amounts according to the type of insurance purchased will apply. For information on vaccinations needed in each country, we recommend you consult <http://www.cdc.gov/>.

Medical Expenses

In the event of a medical emergency where expenses are involved, the passenger must pay the expenses directly and mail receipts to our Boston office for reimbursement. Deductible amounts per the type of insurance purchased.

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SAFETY AND SECURITY

The crime rate is low in Morocco, but pickpocketing can be a serious problem. Violent crime against tourists is scarce, but petty theft is common, so while you needn't be worried whilst visiting, you do need to stay alert. Please take normal security precautions as you would do back home.

Tap water is safe in Morocco; it is drunk by all Moroccan people daily. However, it is wise to go with bottled water. In shops small bottles are priced at 3 to 5dh and big bottles are priced at 5 to 6dh; they cost more in hotels and restaurants. We recommend that you have your meals in 'reliable' restaurants and avoid street food.

Should you have any issues at all during your trip, please call ACIS and we will rectify the problem immediately. It is vital that you notify us as soon as you experience a problem as we can resolve issues very quickly on the spot before it adversely affects your trip.

ACIS Emergency number 617-450-5678



OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Country Facts:

Population: 37 million

Currency: Moroccan dirham (MAD)

Language: Arabic (Moroccan dialect,) Berber languages –Tashelhit, Tamazight, Tarifit

National Holidays:

Jan 1 – New Year's Day

Jan 11 – Proclamation of Independence Day

January 14 – Amazigh New Year

May 1 – Labor Day

July 30 – Throne Day – Commemorates the Enthronement of Mohammed VI of Morocco on 7/30/1999

August 14 – Oued Ed-Dahab Day

August 20 – Revolution Day

August 21 – Youth Day (Birthday of Mohammed VI of Morocco)

November 6 – Green March Day (Celebrating the March into the Western Sahara)

November 18 – Independence Day (Celebrating Moroccan Independence from the French and Spanish Protectorates)

Muslim holidays change every year based on the Islamic or *Hijri* calendar. The Hijri is purely lunar calendar as opposed to our purely solar calendar which makes it possible for holidays, such as *Ramadan*, to occur at any time during the year.

Money

The Moroccan Dirham is divided into 100 cents. Bills are in denominations of 200, 100, 50 and 20. Coins are in denominations of 10, 5, 2 and 1dh and 50, 20, 10 and 5 cents.

You can change money in a bank, bureau de change' or at the reception in your hotel at the official rate. There is no commission, and you will be issued with a receipt which you must keep in order to exchange any Moroccan currency left at the end of your visit back into foreign currency upon your departure at the airport. Cash can be withdrawn from ATMs in larger towns. If you are planning to go to the countryside, make sure you have enough cash for your trip. You may take a maximum of 1000dh out of Morocco but anything exceeding that must be reconverted at the airport prior to departure.

Banking hours: Monday to Friday 8:30-15:45. Bureau de change stays open later.

Shopping

Bargaining, or haggling, is a way of life in Morocco and can be an enjoyable experience if you are not in a hurry and willing to take the time to negotiate. Strolls in the Souks or the market of the Jewish quarter, the Mellah, are among the highlights of the city of Marrakech. If you are using your credit card or getting your purchase shipped, make sure you are doing this in a reliable shop and insist on having an invoice as well as the accurate address and contact of the establishment.

Morocco is a Muslim country, so they observe holy days on Fridays. As a result, businesses may be closed on Fridays, especially in the afternoons. In the evenings, however, things can get quite busy again—after prayers are over. Most main tourist attractions remain open on Friday.

Telephone and Internet

If you wish to use your mobile phone in Morocco you can buy a local sim card and a top up but first make sure that your phone is unlocked. A phone card (télécarte) is also available to use on public phones and can be bought in most of the shops in big towns.

If you are connecting to the internet via your phone's 3G signal you will be using your network provider's roaming partners' network, and as such this will incur roaming charges which can become expensive. You might want to disable your phone's internet connection as soon as you arrive in Morocco. Using free Wi-Fi hotspots in your hotel, or in other establishments such as cafes, bars and restaurants, is a great way to keep connected and using Wi-Fi does not incur roaming charges. Make sure your phone settings are on Wi-Fi instead of your home network, otherwise you will still be charged.

Taxis

"Petit taxis" are small cabs that take a maximum of 3 passengers and are ideal for short journeys within the city. They use meters but often prefer to set a price for the journey which you should agree to before getting in the car. The average fare for a one-way journey is between 20 and 30dhs in the daytime and 30 to 50dhs after 8:00pm.

Dress

The sun in Morocco is extremely strong, which is why we recommend hats/head coverings and along with long, light sleeves to keep the sun off skin. Moroccans tend to dress more conservatively than we do in the US, you will see many women wearing *hijabs* or other forms of modest dress that will cover most of their body. As a visitor, you are not expected to dress like a Moroccan, but it is good to be conscious of how you dress. It's recommended to wear clothing that covers your knees, shoulders, and your midriff. Even in the summer, you will see most men wearing pants. Loose fitting clothes are also recommended for both modesty and practical reasons. Tourists, however, can wear shorts and sleeveless tops during the summer.

Climate

Morocco is a semi-desert climate, with mild winters and extremely hot summers. The sun can be extremely strong, so we recommend wearing a wide-brimmed hat to cover your face along with long, light sleeves to keep the sun off your skin.

Average temperature in Marrakech throughout the year:

Marrakesh, Morocco			
Month	Avg. High (F)	Avg. Low (F)	Avg. Rainfall (in)
Jan	66	43	.98
February	70	46	1.03
March	74	50	1.1
April	79	54	.94
May	85	60	.49
June	93	65	.12
July	100	71	.24
August	99	71	.12
September	90	65	.59
October	84	60	.73
November	74	52	1.18
December	67	46	.98

Culture

Most Moroccan people follow the principles of Islam: families have a strong foundation of unity, whether that be the nuclear family or the extended one. Children are also expected to care for their parents as they grow older. There are 38

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We've tried to make this information as accurate as possible, but travel information can sometimes change. We apologize if any of this information is no longer valid. This is only intended to be used as a guideline for your travel destination.

million Moroccan people in the world, about 33 million live in Morocco and around 2.5 million live in France or Spain. Arabic and Berber are the official languages of Morocco. French is also widely spoken, as it is taught as an obligatory language in all schools. In 2010, there were 10,366,000 French-speakers in Morocco, or about 32% of the population. The English name 'Morocco' is an anglicization of the Spanish name for the country, '*Marruecos*', derived from the name of the city of Marrakesh, which was the capital of the Almoravid dynasty, the Almohad Caliphate, and the Saadian dynasty. Morocco's modern Arabic name is '*al-Maghrib*', which translates to '*the land of the sunset/the West*.' A couple of Arabic words that may come in handy are '*salam alikome*' (*salaam a eleikum*), which means '*hello*' or '*peace be with you*.' Another useful phrase is '*choukran*' (*shokran*), which means '*thank you*.'

Cuisine

Moroccan cuisine is known for its bold and diverse flavors, with dishes often featuring cumin, cinnamon, turmeric, ginger, and saffron. Some ingredients that are commonly found in Moroccan dishes include couscous, olives, preserved lemons, and an array of seasonal vegetables and meats, especially lamb and chicken in the interior regions, and seafood in the coastal regions. Culinary traditions are rooted in Morocco's rich cultural diversity and history; communal dining is extremely common during religious and family gatherings, as well as celebratory dishes. Moroccan cuisine is typically a mix of Mediterranean, Arabic, Andalusian and Berber cuisine, influenced by their shared cultural history and exchanges with Morocco.

Mosque Etiquette

Visiting mosques in Morocco can be a deeply enriching cultural experience. To show respect and appreciation for these sacred spaces, it's important to follow certain customs and etiquette. Both men and women are expected to dress modestly, so please make sure that your arms and legs are covered. It is typically custom to remove your shoes upon entry, and there is usually a place where visitors can leave their shoes. Like most places of worship, maintaining a calm and respectful demeanor inside mosques is expected from visitors. Some mosques have restrictions against photography, so please make sure you follow the specific guidelines.

If you are visiting a mosque on a busy site seeing day, you can throw a long skirt and cardigan in your bag and throw it on when you need it.