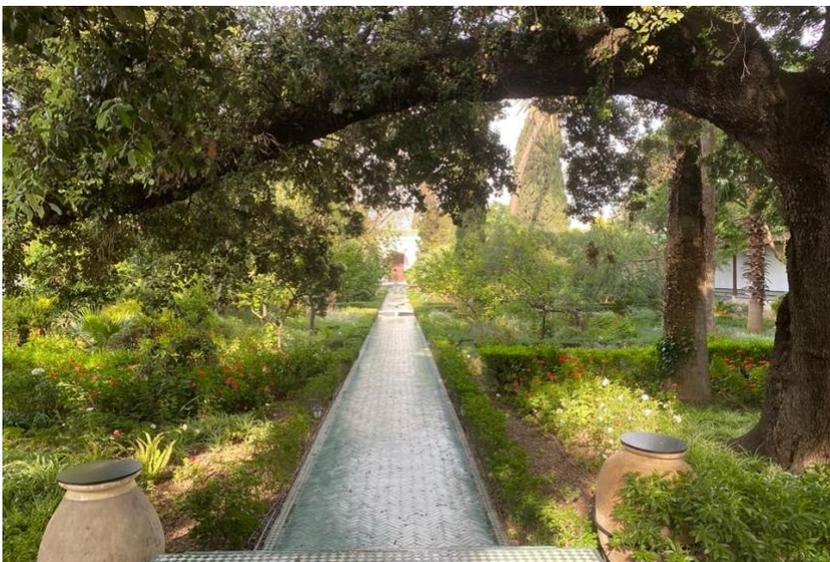


Morocco Gardens & Culture Tour



USEFUL INFORMATION

retreat | recreate

GENERAL

- Morocco is a country of dizzying diversity. Over the centuries, Morocco has woven its ties to Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and the wider Middle East into a whole cloth. Its mixed Arab and Amazigh population forms a strong national identity, taking the best of the country's traditions and weaving the pattern anew – from the countryside to the city, from the call to prayer from the mosque to the beat of local hip hop. You'll find epic mountain ranges, ancient cities, sweeping deserts and warm hospitality
- The population is 37.9 million
- Time zone is GMT/UTC + 1 hour
- Electricity plugs in Morocco are Type C (2-round-pins) and Type E (2-round pins with hole for earthing pin)
- The most common language in Morocco is Darija, a local dialect of Arabic, however French is widely spoken in the cities and tourist areas. In the south, Tamazight (Berber) is widely spoken especially in rural and mountainous areas
- The Muslim weekend is Friday and Saturday. Many shops close at noon on Fridays
- The currency is the Moroccan dirham – MAD. We recommend using a mix of cash and card on this trip. ATMs are common in the cities but less so in rural areas. Download the XE Currency app to your smartphone for instant currency exchange. See the Trip Notes for more details regarding money matters. Try and withdraw cash from banks or ATMs attached to banks, during banking hours, so if you have difficulty you can get assistance. The BMCE group ATMs usually accept foreign debit/credit cards.

CURRENCY AT A GLANCE

Currency exchange rates as at Jan 2026

MAD	GBP	EURO	USD	AUD
200	16.00	18.50	21.50	32.00
100	8.00	9.50	11.00	16.00
50	4.00	4.70	5.40	8.00
20	1.60	1.90	2.15	3.25
10	0.80	0.95	1.10	1.60

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- The retreat|recreate host is Susan Rees-Osborne. Susan's WhatsApp number is +61 423040887
- The tour guide is Khalid Ingrioui. Khalid's WhatsApp number is +212 662 439 694
- Experience Morocco (our in-country operator) – **emergency only** phone number is +212 671 305 248
- Police or ambulance dial 141

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

- **Australian embassy:** 66 Avenue Mehdi Ben Barka, Souissi, Rabat. Tel +212 5375 43366
- **British embassy:** 28 Avenue A.A.R. Sidi Mohammed, Souissi, Rabat. Tel +212 5376 33333
- **Canadian embassy:** 66 Mehdi Ben Barka Ave, Rabat. Tel +212 5375 44949
- **US embassy:** Km 5.7, Avenue Mohamed VI, Souissi, Rabat. Tel +212 5226 42099

TOUR HOTELS

Starting point hotel

Riad Al Miraaj
7 rue Jirari
Rabat 10030.
Tel: +212 (0) 537 738263
WhatsApp: +212 (0) 662689339

Finishing point hotel

Kenzi Rose Garden
Avenue du President Kennedy
Marrakech 40000.
Tel: +212 (0) 524 447400

HEALTH & SAFETY

Please also refer to the Trip Notes

- In addition to influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations, please consult your GP or a travel doctor re other recommended vaccinations
- Take sensible precautions with foods you are unused to, to avoid travellers' diarrhoea. Be wary of ice, and unwashed salads
- Tap water in Morocco is not safe to drink. Please bring a reusable water bottle that can be filled at water stations. We will buy large water bottles for the bus. Consider investing in a self filtering bottle so you can safely use tap water and avoid plastic
- With so much to see and do while travelling, it's easy to forget to drink enough water. Carry electrolytes or rehydration tablets with you
- Wear sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses
- **Carry your own medical kit at all times** (refer to the [Packing List](#))
- If you suffer from motion sickness, please bring anti nausea medication/ginger tablets for travel days
- If you suffer from asthma, bring your inhaler in case the desert air/sand triggers an attack
- The use of a neck wallet or money belt is recommended. Take precautions against pick pockets when in crowded areas. Please leave your valuable jewellery at home
- Be aware of potential scams. If you're approached by 'helpful' locals who offer to take you to their favourite carpet/spice/leather shop a polite 'La shukran' (no thank you) will suffice.



ETIQUETTE

- When entering someone's home, it's considered polite to remove your shoes, especially before entering the carpeted area
- Using your index finger to motion a person to approach you is considered impolite. Moroccans beckon someone by placing the palm downward and sweeping the hand toward themselves
- Delicate subjects include the political situation in the Western Sahara and Algeria. It's also wise to be cautious when talking about Islam and Allah
- Always ask and receive permission before photographing people, particularly children
- Tipping – for when you're out and about on your own – a tip of around 10% is appreciated in restaurants and taxis etc
- Bargaining – you can barter for everything in Morocco, from taxis to goods in the souks. Only ask a price if you're genuinely interested in buying. To begin the haggling, smile and offer half the quoted price. You should end up somewhere in between. Stay calm, polite and friendly!
- Mosque etiquette - most mosques aren't open to non Muslims so this isn't an issue except if you visit the Hassan II mosque in Casablanca. Modest dress (shoulders & knees covered) is requested in the mosque. Headscarves are not required
- Use your right hand when giving or receiving money, food, gifts, business cards etc
- In Islamic and Arabic cultures, the left hand is considered unclean, as this is the hand with which a person performs sanitary tasks. If you are eating from a communal tagine, eat with your right hand only

Suggestions for pre and post tour days in Casablanca & Marrakech

Please note that the following list is the result of many, many hours of research and is a resource made available only to our tour participants. We would be grateful if you would refrain from sharing it.

CASABLANCA

The commercial and financial capital of Morocco, Casablanca is one of the four largest cities in Africa and its port is the busiest in Morocco. In the 20th century during and after the French Protectorate, Casablanca underwent a transformation – the port was massively expanded, futuristic buildings constructed and a colossal laser-topped mosque built.

THINGS TO DO

- Visit the stunning Hassan II mosque, one of the largest mosques in the world. Completed in 1993 from (nearly) all Moroccan materials, it houses an astonishing 105,000 worshippers. Guided tours are available all week, outside prayer times.
- Wander the new medina (the Quartier des Habous, built in the 1930s), the old medina, the beachfront (the Corniche), or the art deco boulevards.
- Villa des Arts – an art deco building housing an art gallery with rotating exhibitions. Free entry. 30, Boulevard Brahim Roudani, Casablanca. +212 5222 95094
- Galerie H – a gallery featuring young Moroccan designers. 181 Bd d’Anfa, Casablanca. +212 5223 94394
- Jewish Museum, 81 Rue Chasseur Jules Gros. 10am-5pm Mon-Fri
- Musee Fondation Abderrahman Slaoui – a private collection of paintings, jewellery and objets d’art, Rue du Parc. 10am-6pm Tues-Sat +212 5222 06217
- Take a food tour through Taste of Casablanca. 3 x hour tasting tour lunch/dinner. WhatsApp +212 630 847014
- Experience a traditional hammam at Hammam Ziani, Boulevard d’Alsace +212 5223 19695, or Association Solidarite Feminine at 10 Rue Bait Lahm, Palmier, Casablanca. +212 6191 11116

EATING

- The fresh food market is an interesting place to wander and a good place for lunch
- Al-Mounia – Moroccan fare, good vegetarian options. Indoor or al fresco dining in a pretty garden and courtyard. 95 Rue du Prince Moulay Abdellah. +21 5222 22669
- Au Petit Poucet – French/Moroccan restaurant in a 1920s building. Excellent food. 86 Blvd Mohammed V. +212 5222 75420
- Cafe Imperial – Rue Ibn Khaldoun, Habous district
- Chez Paul – French restaurant in the former villa of Edith Piaf. Villa Zevaco, cnr Blvd d’Anfa & Blvd Moulay Rachid. Light meals, afternoon tea and ice cream. +212 5223 66000
- Dar Dada, 31 Rue El Arsa, Casablanca +212 661 602602
- Etoile Centrale – 107 Rue Allal Ben Abdellah. Closed Fridays. Traditional Moroccan décor and cuisine
- La Sqala – traditional Moroccan cuisine in the old fort by the port. Outdoor dining. Blvd des Almohades. +212 5222 60960
- Le Bistronome – beautiful little French restaurant. 38 Boulevard Rachidi, Casablana. +212 5222 66160
- Petit Lapin Café, Cnr Boulevard Rachidi & Rue D’Alger
- Rick’s Café – a bar and restaurant designed to replicate Humphrey Bogart’s famous café from the film Casablanca. 248 Boulevard Sour Jdid, Casablanca. +212 5222 74207
- The James Rooftop – rooftop bar and restaurant with good food and great views. Corner Boulevard Rachidi and Boulevard Moulay Youssef, Casablanca. +212 7666 47790

MARRAKECH

For more than two centuries Marrakech was the hub of a great empire. While it's now only Morocco's fourth largest city, its fabulous palaces and luxuriant palm groves continue to enthrall. Today Marrakech has embraced modernity and is home to a vibrant culture, global businesses and fabulously wealthy expats.

THINGS TO DO

** indicates this is included on the itinerary*

- *ANIMA Gardens – a whimsical sculpture park within beautiful gardens – a shuttle takes you there and back from Koutoubia mosque carpark, included in entry price
- Amal Non Profit Women's Training Centre Cooking Class. Book online at amalnonprofit.org or phone +212 5244 93776. Cook (and eat) traditional tagines, couscous or pastille, or learn to make Moroccan pastries
- Bahia Palace – a 19th century palace decorated with stucco plaster, zellige mosaic tiles, carved wood, stained glass and traditional gardens. Built by a former slave who rose to become one of Sultan Hassan I's most important aides. 9-5 daily.
- Dar El Bacha museum, a 'Museum of Cultural Confluences' in the old house of the pacha of Marrakech. Beautiful architecture, exhibitions, and a fancy coffee shop. Rue Fatima Zahra. 10am-6pm, closed Mondays
- El Badi Palace – ruins of the place of the sultan. Late 1500s. Although a ruin, it's worth a look. Ksibat Nhass. 9-5 daily
- *Jardin Marjorelle – the original home of artist Jacques Marjorelle, later purchased and restored by Yves Saint Laurent. Stunning cactus/succulent garden, and the old cubist style electric blue artist's studio is now a fabulous Museum of Berber Arts. Open daily 8am-6pm. Expect crowds and queues. Rue Yves Saint Laurent
- Le MAP Museum (Monde des Arts de la Parure). A stunning private collection of adornment – jewellery, textiles, costume. Great rooftop café. Highly recommended. 39,40 Ksibat Nhass. 10-4 daily except Mondays
- Mederssa Ben Youssef – recently renovated 12th century mosque and Koranic school. Stunning architecture. 9-8 daily
- Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden (MACAAL) – exhibitions of modern African art, a sculpture garden and café. Open Wed-Sun. Sidi Youssef Ben Ali
- Museum of Moroccan Art and Culture MACMA – a private museum featuring objets d'art, photography, pottery, jewellery, painting, plus a bookshop. Closed Sundays. 61 Rue Yougoslavie. 10-7 daily.
- Museum of Culinary Arts – an immersive exploration of Morocco's culinary traditions. Interactive exhibits, cooking demos, cooking classes and a restaurant. Rue Riad Zitoun el Jdid. +212 5244 27177 Open 9-8 daily.
- Orientalist Museum - located within a beautiful riad filled with orientalist art. It's a peaceful museum with a lovely rooftop café. Rue Kaat Benahid, No 5 Derb El Khamsi
- *Perfume Museum – a beautiful riad outlining the traditional fragrances (floral, incense etc) of Morocco. 2 Derb Cherif, Rue Diour Saboun. 9-5.30 daily
- Photography Museum – lovely museum featuring photos of old Marrakech, and rotating exhibitions. Great for history and photography enthusiasts. The building is a 17thC Saadian townhouse. Rooftop café. 46 Rue Bin Lafnadek. 9.30am-7pm daily
- *The Secret Garden, a calm oasis in the heart of the medina. The garden is a beautiful example of a classic Islamic quartered garden. Rooftop café. 121 Rue Mouassine
- Tiskiwin Museum – the vast collection of African artefacts, of Dutch anthropologist Bert Flint. Update: closed temporarily
- Women's Museum, dedicated to the history and culture of the Moroccan woman, her daily life and creativity. 19 Rue Sidi Abdel Aziz, Souk Jeld, Marrakech. Open daily 9.30-6.30
- Yves Saint Laurent Museum features a permanent display of YSL couture collections plus works from up & coming Moroccan designers and artists. There's a café within. The modern building itself is beautiful – the rose-hued exterior brickwork is said to resemble the warp and weft of cloth. Next door to the Jardin Marjorelle.

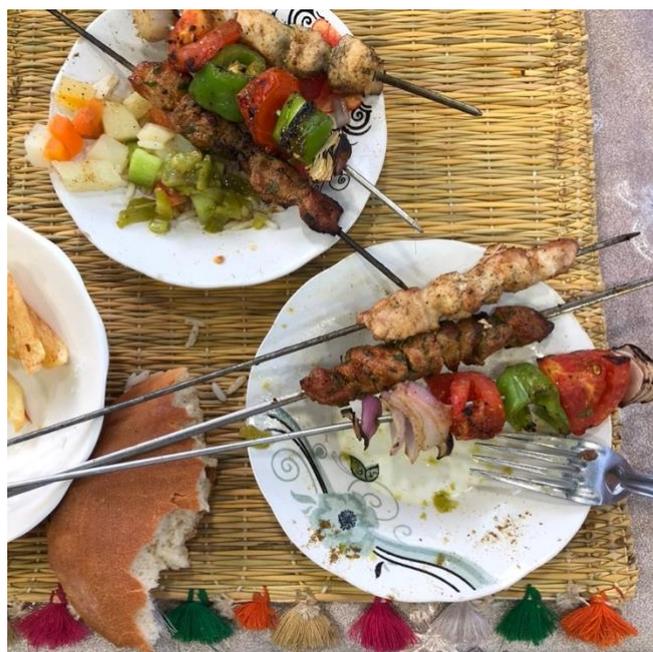
SHOPPING

- Al Nour Textiles, a shop featuring beautiful clothing and household textiles, sewn by a co-op of disabled women. Rue Lanksour 57. Open daily but closed between 2-3pm
- El Fenn, famous upmarket boutique (riad, bar and restaurant too). Derb Moulay Abdullah Ben Hezzian
- Hanout Boutique by Meriem Nour. Fashionable boutique in two locations: 15 Riad Zitoun En Jdid, and 90 Route Sidi Abdelaziz
- Norya Ayrone boutique, 32 Souk El Jeld, Route Sidi Abdelaziz, medina
- Valerie Barkowski – stunning homewares, jewellery, fashion. 142 Arset Zouzal Rd (right near our riad)

EATING

- Cafe Arabe, 184 Rue Mouassine. Italian and Moroccan cuisine, vegetarian-friendly.
- Chez Chegrouni, 46 Jamaa El Fna. Cheap and cheerful, right on the square. Great views from the terrace
- Café Clock, 224 Derb Chtouka. Not just a café but a cultural hub, featuring art exhibitions, story telling, cooking classes and music.
- Café des Epices, 75 Derb Rahba Lakdima, Place des epices. A little bit of Europe overlooking the spices square in the medina.
- Chez Bismilah Sand Coffee, 193 Souk El Kebir, close to Ben Youssef Mederssa. Open daily until 9pm (7pm on weekends).
- Dar Dar, 4 Rue Riad Zitoun el Kdim. Close to our riad. Fabulous for sunset views.
- El Fenn, a very upmarket hotel. Its rooftop bar and restaurant are open to non guests. Derb Moulay Abdullah Ben Hezzian
- Le Foundouk, 55 Souk Hal Fassi Kaat Ben Nahid. Lovely riad restaurant with roof top terrace. International cuisine.
- Henna Art Café, 35 Derb Sqaya
- Kabana Rooftop Food & Cocktails, 1 Kissariat Ben Khaled R'Mila, Rue Fatima Zahra.
- Kosy Bar, Tinsmiths Square.

- La Famille, vegetarian restaurant in a garden setting. Open for lunch and dinner daily except Sundays. 34 Derb Jdid.
- L'Adresse, 5 Rue de la Koutoubia, Main square.
- L'Mida, 78 bis Derb Nkhel Rahba Kdima.
- Le Jardin, modern food in a stunning 16th century riad setting. Opposite the Womens Museum. 32 Souk Jeld Sidi Abdelaziz. 10-11 daily.
- Les Terrasses de L'Alhambra, Main square.
- Nomad, a lovely rooftop restaurant open for lunch and dinner. Modern Moroccan cuisine. 1 Derb Aarjane
- Petanque Social Club, 74. Boulevard El Mansour Eddahbi, Gueliz
- Pepe Nero, 17 Derb Cherkaoui, Douar Graoua. Italian and Moroccan cuisine. Candles, pools, fountains and plants!
- Sahbi Sahbi, fab women-run restaurant in the new town. Daily dinner except Mondays. 37 Boulevard el Mansour Eddahbi. Highly recommended!
- Terrace des Epices, 15 Souk Charifia, Sidi Abdel Aziz, Dar el Bacha. A lovely and slightly pricey restaurant. Next door to The Secret Garden.
- Un Dejeuner a Marrakech, Cnr Rue Kennaria & Rue Douar Graoua. Modern Moroccan cuisine. Sit on the rooftop terrace and enjoy the views.



MOROCCO'S GARDENS

Morocco has a remarkably diverse natural landscape, ranging from the snow-capped High Atlas Mountains and green forests of the Middle Atlas to the orange sand dunes of the mighty Sahara in the southeast. The country also boasts a 1,350 km coastal stretch along the Atlantic and Mediterranean, fertile plains in the northwest, rocky, rugged slopes in the Anti-Atlas Mountains, and Tafilalet, the largest date palm oasis in the world.

In terms of the country's man made gardens, they run the gamut from ornamental and decorative spaces created for leisure and enjoyment, to innovative spaces showcasing environmental principles and sustainable practices, to examples of traditional Islamic design, to a garden dedicated to ensuring the preservation of endangered species, to many many more. We will see whimsical gardens filled with sculpture and art, dry gardens carved out of harsh landscapes, lush oases created by world famous landscape designers, and highly stylised modern gardens created by 20th century artists and visionaries.

To read more about some of the gardens we will visit, see the brief outlines below and follow the links for more information.

[Andalusian Garden](#), Rabat

Laid out during the French Protectorate period and designed to imitate the Andalusian style, these gardens are located within the UNESCO World Heritage listed Kasbah of the Oudaias. The beautiful garden is filled with citrus trees, palms and bougainvillea, cypresses, jasmine, and 650 varieties of flora.

[The Exotic Gardens of Bouknadel](#)

These gardens are home to more than 600 plant species from five continents, and 80 animal species. They comprise 4.5 hectares organised thematically according to three concepts: nature, cultures and didactics.

[Garden of Rohuna](#)

The passion project of Italian horticulturalist and writer Umberto Pasti, the mission of this world famous, stunning garden is to save indigenous local flora and preserve the botanical richness of northern Morocco and the Atlantic coast.



[Donabo Botanic Gardens](#), Tangier

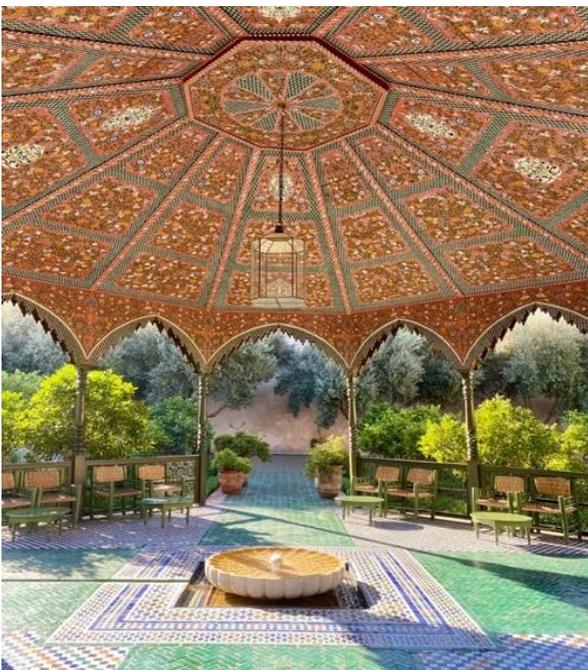
These pretty gardens sit atop a mountain overlooking the sea. Created by the king's sister Princess Malika El Alaoui to honour her late father King Hassan II and designed by English artist Paul Belvoir, the property features ten gardens, including a Mediterranean garden, a Chinese garden, a Moroccan garden and a mint maze in honour of Morocco's famous mint tea.

[Jardin Marjorelle](#), Marrakech

This very famous garden was created by the French orientalist painter Jacques Marjorelle in 1922. Conceived as a 'botanical laboratory', Marjorelle filled it with exotic specimens from around the world. After his death the property and garden declined and were eventually purchased in 1966 by the French designer Yves Saint Laurent and his partner Pierre Bergé. They restored the garden, and today Marjorelle's old art nouveau painting studio is a museum dedicated to Amazigh (Berber) culture.

[The Secret Garden](#), Marrakech

A beautiful oasis in the midst of Marrakech's bustling medina. The property features two parts – a recreated 19th century Islamic garden layout, and an exotic garden featuring plants from around the world. The four parts of the Islamic garden are said to resemble heaven as described in the Quran. The website outlines the full history of the site and the long process of restoring the palace building and bringing the gardens to life, beginning in 2012.



[Nectarome](#), Ourika Valley

This garden is Morocco's first organic aromatic garden, showcasing around fifty aromatic and medicinal plants predominantly from the local area. Created by two brothers – one a pharmacist and the other an aromatherapist – the garden was initially created and planted to conduct trials for botanical research for their natural cosmetics company, and later opened to the public.

[Anima](#), Marrakech

The wondrous and playful creation of artist André Heller, this 3 hectare garden outside Marrakech features lush botanical delights, gazebos, ponds, wandering pathways and a dizzying array of sculptures and artworks by world famous artists including Picasso and Keith Haring, all framed by the dramatic backdrop of the Atlas Mountains.

[Dar Al Hossoun gardens](#), Taroudant

Designed by landscape architects Ossart and Maurières, this stunning garden contains 900 different species of desert flora including agaves, kalanchoes, aloes, cacti, opuntias and euphorbias. Many of the species represented are endangered and the Dar Al Hossoun garden plays an important role in helping protect them from extinction.