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MARRAKECH

THE GUIDE

THE MAGICAL CITY

Board the plane and walk into a 1001-night-setting, that's Marrakech. Clearly Arabic and probably more colourful than any other city trip you'll ever make. It's magical, authentic, and an upcoming city. In Marrakech, everything revolves around the Medina. The Jemaa-El-Fna square is filled with orange juice sellers, henne artists, acrobats and snake charmers, which are mostly for the tourists.

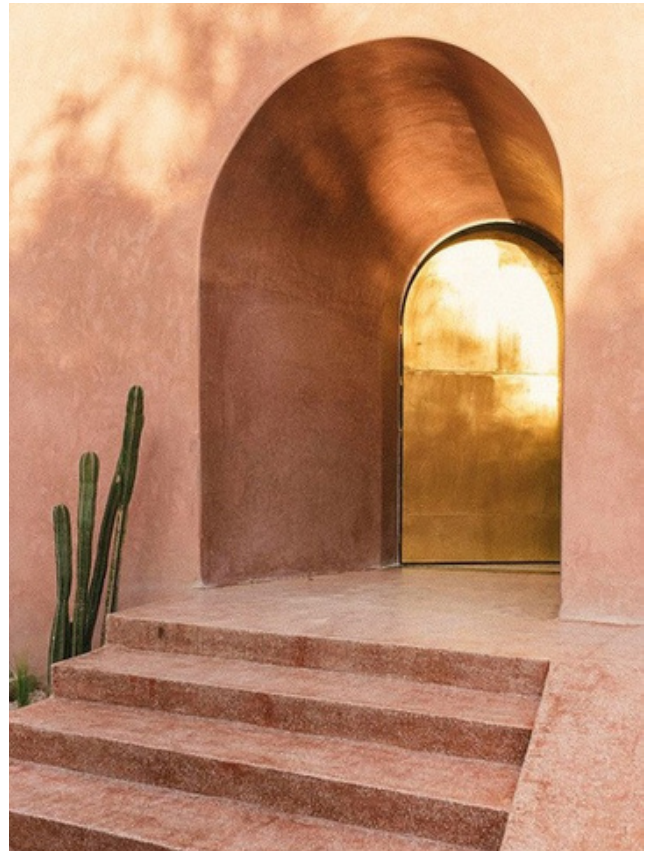
LITTLE HISTORY

Marrakech was founded in 1062. The red walls of the city, built in 1122, and various buildings constructed in red sandstone during this period, have given the city the nickname of the 'Red City'. In the year 1912 France established a protectorate over Morocco. In 1956, Morocco was officially declared independent, but the French colonial influence is still evident in Morocco. Almost all of the Moroccans speak fluently French as the language is still dominant in education and administration.

Marrakech has around 1 million inhabitants and locals are called Marrakechis. Next to them, a lot of expats packed their bags and now call Morocco their home from all over the world move to Marrakech.

THE MEDINA

Also known as the "old city" in Marrakech. This is where the magic happens. The Medina is built with narrow alleys, filled with mosques and is entirely walled. The walls of the Medina are about 20kilometers long and have 19 gates, called "bab" in Arabic. These are absolutely stunning and the perfect spots to take photos. Bab Agnaou is our favorite!



THINGS TO KNOW

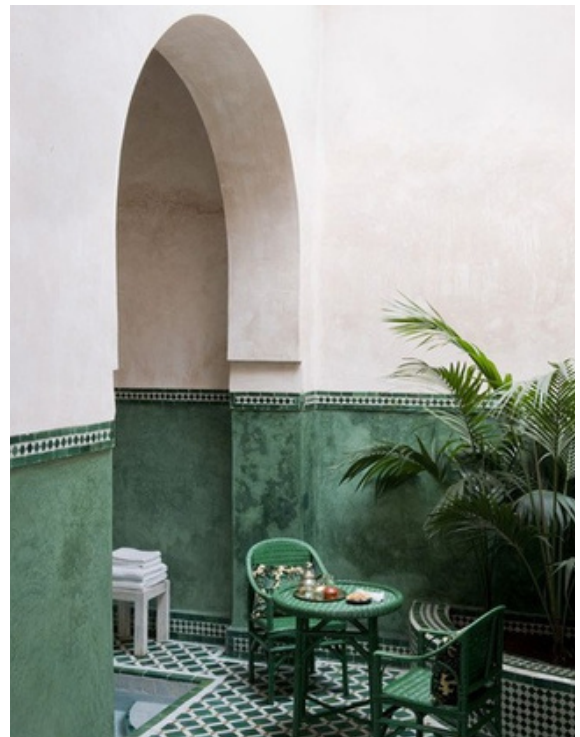
Marrakech is located in the northwest of Morocco. Discovered just 1000 years ago. It sits not far from the Sahara Desert and is known by its pink/red color. Therefore, the nickname "The Red City" isn't hard to explain. Marrakech is an exceptional city with its rich history, culture and a lot of traditions, beautiful structure and soothing gardens.

TAKING A PHOTO OF A LOCAL

Always ask before taking a photo of locals and give a few dirhams afterwards as a thank you.

HOW TO GET AROUND

Taxis are the easiest way to discover the city. But we would always recommend a private taxi or private car (generally from a touristic rental company or from the hotel). A "taxi vert" option is always available by calling +212524409494. You can tell where you are and they will send a taxi. You always pay the price on the meter, plus an additional 15 dirhams service fee. You can recognize them through the "taxi vert" sticker on the front window and the driver is obligated to turn on the meter.



DON'T TRUST UNWANTED ADVICE

That may sound harsh, but please listen to it. In Marrakech, locals are happy to help you (for example to lead the way somewhere), remember, in the Medina : nine out of ten times, they want money for it. Once they see that you're searching, someone will walk up to you to kindly as if you're lost. Next, they might say that the roads are closed for some reason, and they will lead you the way. In 90 percent of the cases, it's not true. If you get lost, use a map on your phone or ask the way in a shop, a riad, or a restaurant.

HOW TO DRESS

It's not necessary to fully cover yourself in Marrakech. We would, however, advise against wearing hot pants and crop tops. Are you going to visit a religious place? Make sure that everything is covered, including your hair.

Time

UTC + 0

Currency

Moroccan dirhams (MAD or DH). You should have no issue paying with credit card in hotels and some restaurants. But in the city, and especially in the Medina, we some Dirhams with you (that you can get easily at an ATM)

Religion

Morocco is a muslim country, so please respect the islamic religion, laws and traditions.

Language

Darija (the moroccan dialect) aka arabic. Many locals speaks fluent French and English.

LUNCH & DINNER

Between all the walking in the Medina, you sometimes need a break. Luckily there are some restaurants and cafés which are the perfect hotspots. We've listed our favourite ones, so you don't have to search for the perfect spot to enjoy your little break. The ones marked with a star are the ones where you can get a glass of alcohol.*

LA FAMILLE (lunch only)

Go to La Famille for the nude colors, the organic, vegetarian dishes on the menu, the beautiful garden, the cutest family who owns this little paradise and the small concept store. Reservation needed.

Where 34, Derb Jdid
Open Monday till Saturday, from 12 till 4.30pm
Instagram @la_famille_marrakech

Le Jardin

Kamal Laftimi and his interior architect Anne Favier did just an amazing work. A truly magical oasis in the heart of the bustling medina of Marrakech. Accentuated by Norya Ayron's concept store, this restaurant is the perfect spot for lunch or dinner, art & shopping.

Where Open 32, Souk Jeld Sidi Abdelaziz
Instagram Daily from 11am till 11pm
@lejardinmarrakech

Café des épices

Located at the "Place des épices", the Rahba Lakdima square, in Marrakech. One of the best known cafés with good food, music and a nice view. Not for a fancy dinner, but perfect to have lunch or a mint tea while shopping. Always with Anne Favier, Kamal Laftimi has created the well-known Café des épices with its red walls, open-air terrace and rooftop. The restaurant offers a selection of open-air tables, large moroccan and sheltered lounges, and cosy intimate alcoves.

Where 75, Derb Rahba Lakdima
Open Daily from 9am till 10pm
Instagram @cafedesepices



Tipping culture :

Tipping isn't mandatory in Morocco, rounding up the bill and leaving tips at restaurants and cafes is standard practice. If you're happy with the service provided by waiters, drivers and other service workers, leaving a small tip is a good way to show your appreciation.



LUNCH & DINNER

Bacha Coffee House

The ideal place for a coffee with sweets. The coffee house is located in the former manor of Thami El Glaoui (an ancient Governor of Marrakech). Built in 1910, the spectacular Dar el Bacha palace, which means "house of the Pasha", united the greatest cultural and political minds of the century over glittering pots of "coffee of Arabia" or Arabica, as it is known today. Closed for 60 years, Bacha Coffee has reopened to continue the tradition offering fine 100% Arabica coffees from around the world.

Where Inside Dar El Bacha Museum
Open Wednesday till Monday, from 10am to 6pm
Instagram @bachacoffeeofficial

Atay Café

A hidden gem and not familiar among many tourists. A bright restaurant with a roof terrace in boho vibes. Here you'll also find the perfect view on the Medina. The Moroccan food is good, we would advise to try briouates & moroccan tajines.

Where Open
Instagram 62, Rue Amsefah Sidi Abdelaziz
Daily from 10am till 11pm
@atay_cafe



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Le Tobsil *

Our favourite for real Moroccan Gastronomy. The restaurant offers the ideal setting to plunge into the romantic side of the Medina. Set within a sumptuous riad, the restaurant offers a 5-course tasting menu accompanied by Gnaoua, a live traditional music. A reservation is required.

Where Derb Abdellah Ben Hessein, R'Mila
Open Daily from 7.30pm till midnight

Le Foundouk *

The Foundouk was previously a caravanserai where traders and travelers who were passing through Marrakech make a stop with their mounts. In 2000 this caravanserai was bought and restored to open its doors. The famous Le Foundouk terrace with a breathtaking view of Marrakech, is part of the international selection - CNN 2016 - of the best "Rooftop Restaurant"

Where 55, Souk Hal Fes - Kaat Bennaïd
Open Open every day except Wednesday from 7pm to midnight
Instagram @lefoundouk

DRINKS & FUN



Le Comptoir Darna *

Le Comptoir also known as Le Comptoir Darna is a legendary Marrakech venue, located in the heart of the buzzing Hivernage district West of the Old town Medina. Dependable up market dining with an excellent show usually comprising drummers and dancers who perform in a variety of classical and cabaret styles. Upstairs is a bar with music and dancing until the early hours. Reservation required.

Where Avenue Chouhada

Open Daily from 8.00pm till 3am

Instagram @comptoirdarna



Babouchka *

For the music enthusiasts, Babouchka boasts some of the finest local and international DJs, spinning an eclectic mix of beats that keep the dance floor alive until the early hours. Whether you're into electronic dance music, house, or the latest chart-toppers, Babouchka has the perfect playlist to keep you grooving all night long. Reservation required.

Where 10 Rue Haroun Errachid

Open Daily from Midnight to 5am

Instagram @babouchkamarrakech



Jad Mahal *

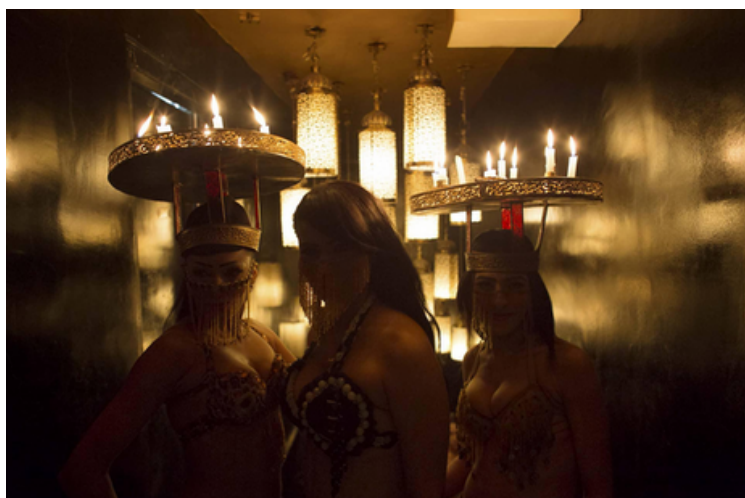
An exquisite establishment in the Hivernage district, the Jad Mahal combines restaurants, bars and breathtaking shows. In the kitchen, the chef offers an inventive and tasty international menu, with Thai, Moroccan and French influences. During your dinner, a parade as dazzling as it is glamorous, made up of acrobats, fire eaters and belly dancers, wanders from table to table, with an amazing Live Band playing. Reservation required.

Where 10 Rue Haroun Errachid

Open Daily from 8pm till 1.30am

Instagram @palaisjadmahal

DRINKS & FUN



Palais Dar Soukar *

It is an odyssey to a Marrakech of sparkling lights. Like an awakened dream, the show will leave you breathless and astonished. This particular and unique place is inhabited by an indescribable beauty. In this ancient sugar factory, we come to enjoy the best of the three cuisines, Moroccan, Asian and Mediterranean, to finally get inebriated by its music and shows. Reservation required.

Where 3,5 km Ourika road

Open Daily from 7.00pm till 3am

Instagram @dar.soukar



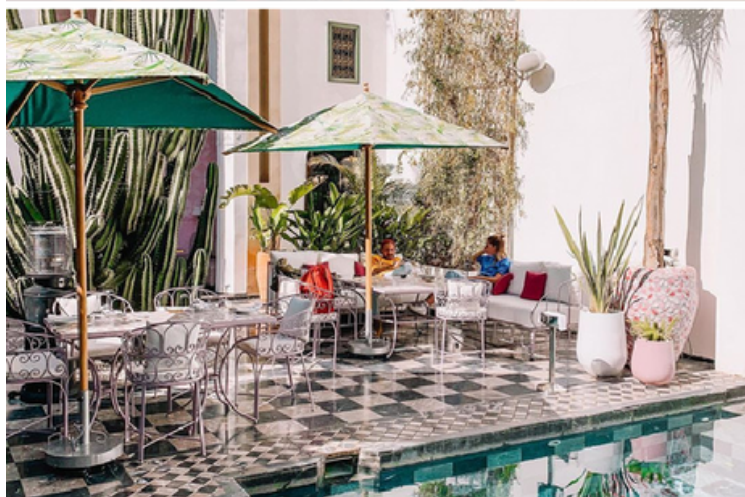
Azar *

Nestled in a small street in Gueliz, Azar is among the most beautiful places of Marrakech. With its soft and subdued lights, the cuisine and the oriental decor, it offers you the ultimate experience around the Orient, through music and art of living. Reservation required.

Where Rue Yougoslavie, Gueliz

Open Daily from 7pm till 1am

Instagram @azarmarrakech



Les Jardins du Lotus *

In the heart of the medina and nestled at the end of an alley, Les Jardins du Lotus welcomes you in an exceptional setting with a sophisticated decor. The dishes are fresh and refined, you will find Mediterranean and international specialties. The atmosphere is rather trendy in the evening with music and DJ and quiet during lunch. Reservation required.

Where 9 Derb Sidi Ali Ben Hamdouch

Open Daily from noon till 4pm and 7-11pm

Instagram @lesjardinsdulotus

HAMMAM & SPA



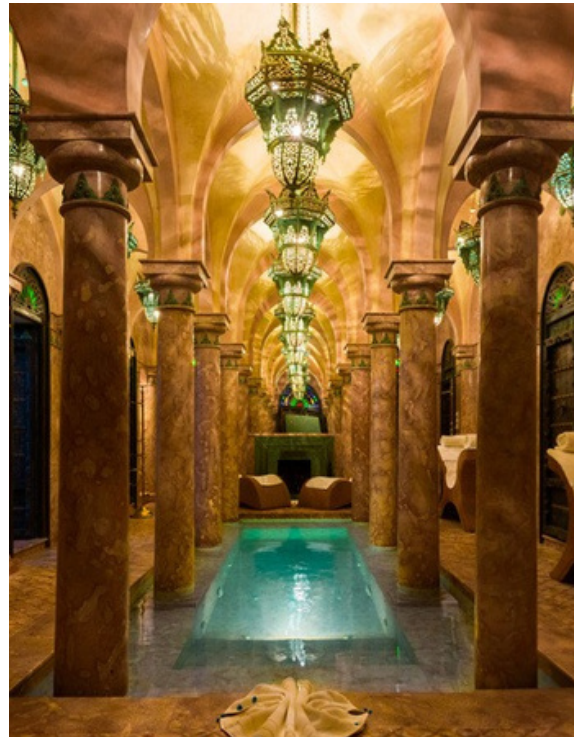
Maybe you've heard of it, and maybe you're wondering what is a hammam? The Moroccan hammam is one of the most widely loved and yet puzzling experiences for people who have never visited Morocco. While public bathhouses might be associated with Turkish and Roman cultures, the traditional Moroccan hammam is a unique experience.

THE CULTURE

For most Moroccans, the Hammam is more than a spa day; it is the place of all meetings. Where men, separated from women, talk about their lives. They introduce each other's children and make friends. It is a very different heat bath from the sauna, which is based on dry heat. It is also different from the Turkish bath, which is almost completely steamed. The Moroccan hammam heats with a coil system up to half height. Unlike the Turkish bath, it is wet but not filled with moisture. Inspired by the Roman baths that the Arabs discovered to conquer Syria, the hammam is currently and often composed of one piece or two for the exfoliation. However, it is its shortened version that we know today. Traditionally, it includes several rooms (minimum 3) that will increase in temperature to reach the hottest room of 50 °. The goal is to evolve within these parts by accustoming the body to a gradually more intense heat. Thanks to this heat, the skin will become suppler, the pores will open.

A BEAUTY RITUAL

To enjoy the benefits of a hammam, stay there for a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 1 hour, rest and lie on the floor or on the benches. During this time, a Kessala (name of the women practicing the scrubs in the hammams), can apply natural moroccan black soap on your whole body. Then, after a pause of about fifteen minutes where rest is required, the Kessala will rinse the black soap, using a Kessa glove, before rubbing your body to remove impurities. Thanks to these different steps, it is a real deep exfoliation which, for novices, is sometimes incredible as the dead skin comes off and is unclogged. After a thorough rinse, the Moroccan Rhassoul clay is used on the body and hair. Excellent washing product, Rhassoul will definitely wash the body and make it soft and supple. After these treatments, a nourishing massage nourishes the skin and the little extra that remains is the mint tea to finish this moment of incomparable tranquility. Some facts about the Hammam Beauty Effect : -Physical and emotional detox. Reduce stress, anxiety and allow deep relaxation. -Better sleep. Helps rejuvenate your body while sleeping.



-Beautifying the body and face. Take away dead skin from your body, unclog pores while eliminating toxins from the skin and -Fight acne. Regulate skin oil secretions to prevent acne and help heal scars and reduce redness. -Skin nourishing and rehydration. Provides essential vitamins and minerals. -Anti-aging. Allow your inner organs to breathe. Helps toning, firming the skin while improving elasticity. -Decrease muscle tension. It soothes muscle pain and rheumatism. -Boost the immune system. Activate the blood circulation. -Body and mind connection. Have more energy and feel more balance. -Feel beautiful. Feeling fresh and revitalized.

To summarize, the hammam is absolutely a MUST when you are in Marrakech!

HAMMAM & SPA



Royal Mansour Marrakech Spa

A hidden jewel where the purity of pearly white marble and gentle murmur of fountains set the scene for pure relaxation. The master-room of the Royal Mansour Marrakech Spa, the hammam, invites you to enjoy an immersive and sensual experience rooted in the Moroccan lifestyle. Reservation is required.

Where Royal Mansour Marrakech

Open Daily from 9am to 9pm

Instagram @royalmansour



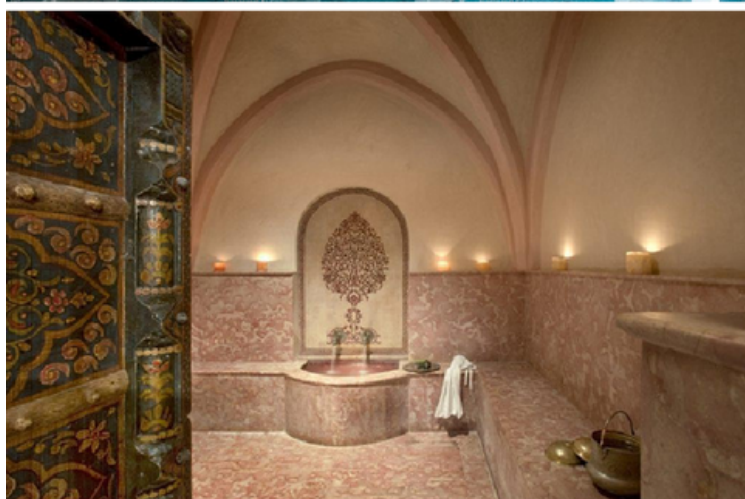
La Mamounia Spa

Sits within a decadent space of 27,000 square feet, the Mamounia Spa is combining clean modern lines with traditional Moroccan features and accents. The Mamounia is welcoming you to experience wellness treatments at its most sophisticated, while its traditional sloping arches and marble fittings is a luxurious haven. Reservation required.

Where The Mamounia Hotel

Open Daily from 7am till 8pm

Instagram @lamamounia



La Sultana

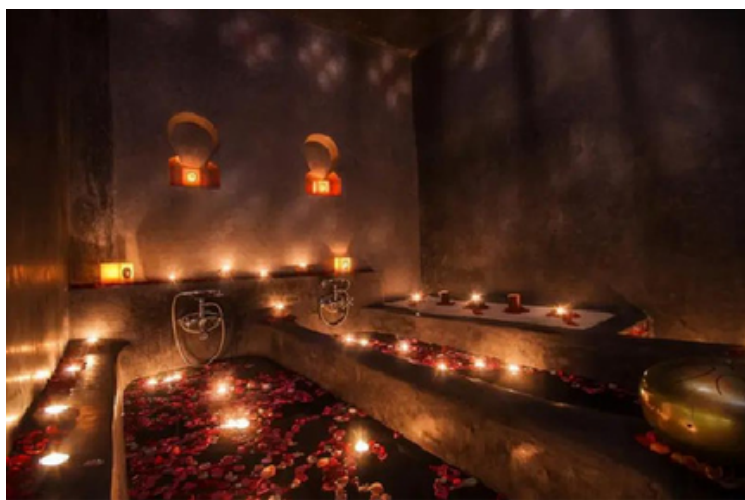
At the heart of the Medina, La Sultana is the promise of eternal beauty. With its pink marble swimming pool, it's like being in a palace of a thousand and one nights. We tested their hammam scrub, just incredible. And their excellent massage, we recommend them! Of course, the spa is open to non-residents of the hotel every day. Reservation required.

Where 403 Rue de la Kasbah

Open Daily from 9am to 8pm

Instagram @lasultanamarrakechofficiel

HAMMAM & SPA



Les Bains de marrakech

An iconic place of relaxation for more than 20 years, Les Bains de Marrakech is a mix between authenticity and intimate atmosphere. They offer a various treatments services with Hammam & scrubs. The prices starts from 45€ up to 160€ for a complete treatment. Reservation Required.

Where Bab Agnaou, 2 Derb Sedra

Open Daily from 10am to 8pm

Instagram @les_bains_de_marrakech



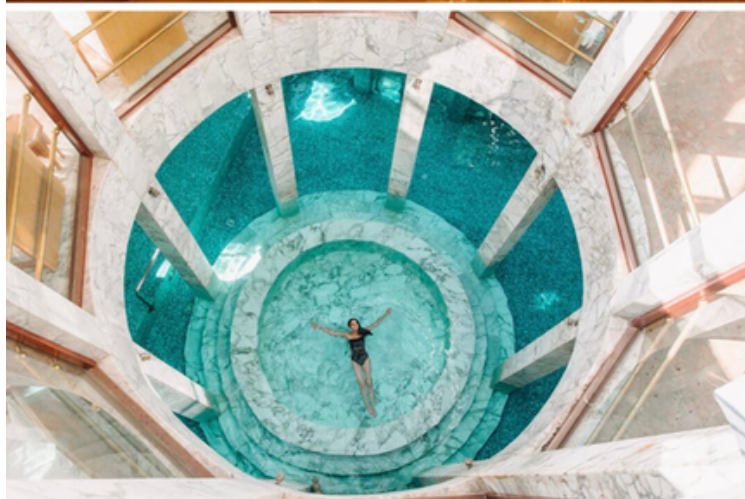
Hammam de la Rose

Our favorite! We prefer to call it the sanctuary of peace and tranquility. Here, you definitely experience in a cultural and sensory journey that allows you to embrace Moroccan traditions of self-care and well-being. Reservation required.

Where 130, Dar El Bacha

Open Daily from 10am till 8pm

Instagram @hammamelarose



Spa of Es Saadi Palace

Bathed in light, surrounded by nature, the Es Saadi Palace Spa is a soothing escape that caters to the beauty and wellness needs of our guests. The largest spa in Marrakech with a unique holistic philosophy, the space spans three levels around a centuries-old tree: an invitation to calm the mind and soothe the soul. Reservation required.

Where Rue Ibrahim El Mazini, Hivernage

Open Daily from 9am to 9pm

Instagram @essaadipalace

SHOPPING

When you're in the mood of shopping in Marrakech, the Souks are an absolute must-visit. The first stop can be the Main Street (which you access from Jamaa el Fna square), where you can find a selection of all goods & flavors. Around it, districts are divided by craft's categories. So you'll find the Nehassine (brass artisans), the Debbaghine (leather artisans) and so many others. Each street has a name, just look up !



The shops are different, you will jump from spices to argan oil (normally the real one isn't sold at any random shop, as locals, we get it from the Atlas Mountains or from Agadir). If you need help, please ask a shop owner.



RAHBA LEKDIMA

Or the "Spice Square" is one of the most instagramable areas in the Medina! It's ringed with with apothecaries who sell spices and mysterious spell supplies to tourists. We hate to say it but locals doesn't get their magic supplies from the Place des Epices ! The square is filled with cute Doum (straw) objects, like the cute bags and hats. You can also customize them on spot.

For something new and modern, concept stores are the best spots. Here are our favorite adresses!

RAQAS

This boutique is so new, they don't even have their website up yet, so you get map directions so you don't skip it. If you love maxi dresses, prints and looking for modern Moroccan fashion, then you know where to go. Prices are in the \$100-\$200 range.

Where 1, Souk Laksour

Instagram [@raqas.marrakech](https://www.instagram.com/raqas.marrakech)

SHOPPING

TOPOLINA

With her son, Isabelle creates one-of-a-kind pieces that range from flea market purses to extravagant statement jackets (there is a bigger, better version of this store in Sidi Ghanem, but this one is more central)

Where 134 dar el bacha

Instagram @topolinashop

KARIM BOURIAD

A boho-chic boutique with stylish kaftans, jackets, dresses and accessories.

Where 134 dar el bacha

Instagram @topolinashop

NORYA AYRON

Where 17 Tarik Ibn Ziad Street Guéliz

Instagram @noryaayron



MAX & JAN

An elegant and authentic boutique whose motto is "Glam in the Medina"

Where 14 Rue Amsefah, Sidi Abdelaziz

Instagram @maxandjan



MUSTAPHA EL BLAOUI

Mustapha Blaoui owns and runs a famous Bazaar located in the fashionable dar el basha area. Here you can buy carpets, lamps, leather and art items, mostly manufactured within the local area. It is a great place especially if you are an inexperienced haggler or just want to get away from the beautiful madness of the Marrakech souks. You will not come out empty handed.

Honestly, it's the best spot for tables and chairs, glassware, mirrors, candlesticks, pots and bowls

Where 144 Arset Aouzal

Instagram @mustaphablaoui

SHOPPING

ART/C

Maison ARTC, the brand, was born from Israeli and Moroccan designer Artsi who lives, works and creates in Marrakech. Having never attended any school or program in fashion, he sees himself as an autodidact and has learnt to love the freedom it has given to him.

Throughout the past three years Maison ARTC has shown at Paris Couture week with some of the biggest names in fashion. His work draws from deep emotion and he creates one of a kind pieces for both men and women. The principle is simple and

Where 4 Bd el Mansour Eddahbi

Instagram @maisonartc

33 RUE MAJORELLE

Concept store with expertly curated fashion and housewares, plus a juice bar. Great stop while visiting the Jardin Majorelle & Yves Saint Laurent Museum.

Where 33 rue majorelle

Instagram @33ruemajorelle

LRNCE

LRNCE was founded after Leenaert dropped out of her Master's at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Ghent. The original concept was to specialize in leather bags, but the rich pool of experts in Marrakesh allowed for expansion. LRNCE has grown to include ceramics, textiles, sandals, mirrors, wall hangings, and kimono coats.

Where 59 Rue Sidi Ghanem

Instagram @lrnce



SOUFIANE ZARIB

Soufiane Zarib is a Moroccan rug dealer who has been in the business for over 20 years. He grew up in the medina of Marrakech, where he was surrounded by rugs from a young age. His father was a rug dealer, and Soufiane Zarib learned the trade from him. Soufiane Zarib is passionate about rugs and believes that they are more than just floor coverings. The rugs are all hand-woven and made from natural materials, such as wool, silk, and cotton.

Where 16 rue Sidi Ali Ben Hamdouch Dar el Bacha

Instagram @soufiane.zarib

SIGHTSEEING



Marrakech is more than just an ancient city in Morocco. It's a sensory experience of vibrant colors, flavors, smells, sounds, and unique sights. It's world-famous for its markets and shopping in the Medina, but there is so much more to do in Marrakech. Once you've witnessed the fascinating mix of European, Middle Eastern, and African cultures, head out of the city for unparalleled mountain and desert scenery.

Wander Around the Medina

The most beautiful part of the Medina is its maze of narrow streets that transport you back in time. Throw your map in the garbage and lose yourself in the excitement while dodging donkeys and carts. Admire the colors of the walls and buildings, the smells of the food and spices, and speak to friendly locals. Most unique of all is the sound of the call to prayer echoing among the narrow streets coming from the many mosques situated close by. To experience this high up, head to one of the many rooftop cafes to experience panoramic sounds and views.

JAMAA EL FNA SQUARE

At the heart of the Medina lies the world-famous Jamaa el Fnaa square. Walking through this square is an experience like no other! Feel the heat beating off the stone floor as you worm your way through snake charmers, entertainers, and street food stalls selling fresh juices. By night, the square comes to life with music, with flute players, dancers, and artists all showing their talents under the twinkling lights of the stalls. This amazing demonstration of Moroccan culture is not to be missed!

TIP:

Keep few dirhams to tip performers (5 - 10 dirhams) and a bit more when you want to take a picture of locals & shops.

BEN YOUSSEF MEDRASA

Explore a world of stunning symmetry, and intricately patterned mosaics, in this former Islamic school. Located near the medina, Ben Youssef Madrasa used to be the largest Islamic college in Morocco. Founded in the 14th century, the madrasa was at one time the largest Qur'anic school in North Africa. Following Moroccan and Andalusian architecture, the large central courtyard is breathtaking. Spend an hour or so here, admiring the beautiful Moroccan architecture, especially the remarkable interior terrace that's centered around a tranquil pool. Tickets are approximately 5€.



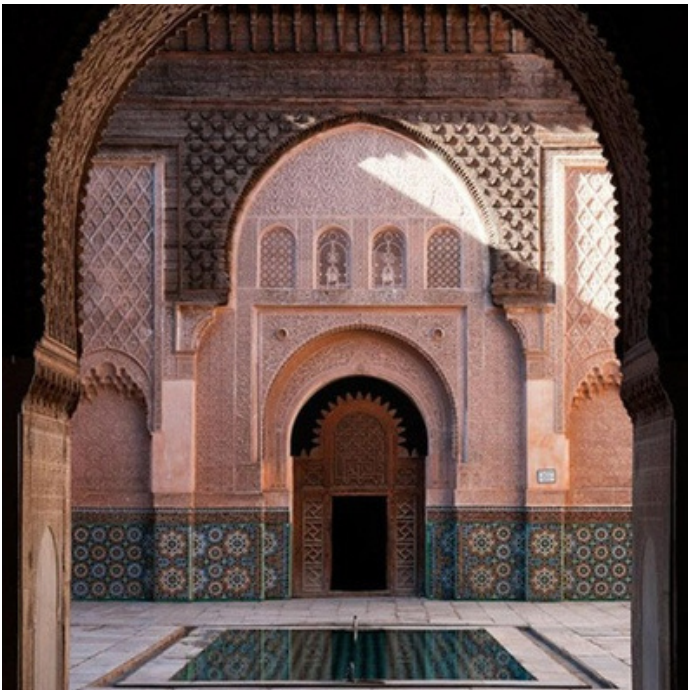
BAHIA PALACE

-This extraordinary palace, with 150 rooms, was built in the 19th century by the grand vizier of the sultan, who hoped for it to be the greatest palace of all time. Discover the traditional Moroccan architecture of the courtyards, filled with orange trees and fountains, and the beautiful stained glass windows and tilework. Most impressive of all is the huge, luxurious marble courtyard at the center of the palace complex. Don't miss out on the opportunity to learn about the fascinating history of the grand vizier, his family, and his many wives. Note : nly a portion of the palace is available to see, but it's definitely worth it, especially as it's located just a 20-minute walk from Jamaa el Fnaa square. Entrance is 70 Dhs (7€), and it's open Monday to Sunday from 8 AM - 5 PM.

SIGHTSEEING

THE MELLAH

The Mellah is the old Jewish Quarter of Marrakech. It was created by Sultan Abdallah al-Ghalib of the Saadian dynasty in 1558. The purpose was to provide protection to Jews fleeing persecution in the Iberian Peninsula, as required by Sharia law at the time. Restored several times over the years, the maze of tight laneways has less of the craziness of the medina, and more characteristics of an interesting local neighbourhood.



EL BADI PALACE

El Badii Palace is an atmospheric collection of ruins. It was constructed to celebrate the victory over the Portuguese and today and takes some imagination to get the most out of it. For what it's worth, we think it's best viewed from the roof terrace at Kosybar with a beer in hand.

MAISON DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE

Housed within this small building is the sort of street photography and portraiture that take you breath away, including some beautiful shots captured more than 150 years ago. If you have even a passing interest in art or photography, or want a snapshot into Morocco's traditions and people, this is somewhere you absolutely can't miss (it may even turn out to be one of your favourite things to do in Marrakech). Just don't forget to make some time to enjoy a mint tea in the rooftop cafe, a spot with arguably one of the best views in town!



YVES SAINT LAURENT'S HOUSE

The former home of Yves Saint Laurent is now one of the most popular tourist attractions in Marrakech featuring his house Villa Oasis, a museum to his life's work, a Berber Museum, and the beautiful Majorelle Garden. The garden was originally designed by Jacques Majorelle, a French artist, who fell in love with the rich blue used in Berber houses and made it a feature in his own home and garden. It had such a mesmerising effect on him that shortly before his death he patented the colour which still carries his name. Majorelle Blue continued to feature heavily after the property was purchased and restored by Yves Saint Laurent in the 1980s. It's a wonderful complex to stroll around. Even for non-fashionistas such as we, the museum to Yves Saint Laurent's design work was interesting and the video of his life compelling. The on-site restaurant is pretty good as well. A combined entry ticket costs 300 dh per person (or separately at a cost of 150 dH for Jardin Majorelle, and 100 dH for the museum - the combo also includes Musée Pierre Bergé).

USEFUL LINGO

SALAM ALEIKOUM

HELLO

LABAS ?

HOW ARE YOU ?

MEZIAN

DOING GOOD

AAFAK

PLEASE

CHOKRANE

THANK YOU

CHOKRAN BEZAF

THANK YOU SO MUCH

SMEHLIA

EXCUSE ME

AAH

YES

LA

NO

CHOUF

LOOK

BCH'HAL ?

HOW MUCH ?

WAKHA

OKAY

BSSEHA W RAHA

TO YOUR HEALTH

BSLAMA

GOODBYE