

Casablanca Quick City Guide



A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO CASABLANCA

Morocco officially the **Kingdom of Morocco**, is a country in the Maghreb region of North Africa. It is one of only three nations (along with Spain and France) to have both Atlantic and Mediterranean coastlines. Geographically, Morocco is characterized by a rugged mountainous interior and large portions of desert. Morocco has a coast on the Atlantic Ocean that reaches past the Strait of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean Sea. It is bordered by Spain to the north (a water border through the Strait and land borders with three small Spanish-controlled exclaves, Ceuta, Melilla, and Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera), Algeria to the east, and Mauritania to the south.

Casablanca is the largest city of Morocco. It is located in western Morocco on the Atlantic Ocean. It is one of the largest and most important cities in Africa, both economically and demographically.



Casablanca is Morocco's chief port and industrial center. It is also the biggest city in the Maghreb. The 2012 census, adjusted with recent numbers, recorded a population of about 4 million in the

prefecture of Casablanca and about 5 million in the region of Grand Casablanca. Casablanca is considered the economic and business center of Morocco, while the political capital city of Morocco is Rabat.

Casablanca hosts headquarters and main industrial facilities for the leading Moroccan and international companies based in Morocco. Industrial statistics show Casablanca retains its historical position as the main industrial zone of the country. The Port of Casablanca is one of the largest artificial ports in the world, and the largest port of North Africa. It is also the primary naval base for the Royal Moroccan Navy.

Culture

Morocco is an ethnically diverse country with a rich culture and civilization. Through Moroccan history, it has hosted many people coming from East (Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Jews and Arabs), South (Sub-Saharan Africans) and North (Romans, Vandals, Andalusians and Moors). All those civilizations have had an impact on the social structure of Morocco. It conceived various forms of beliefs, from paganism, Judaism, and Christianity to Islam.

Since independence, a veritable blossoming has taken place in painting and sculpture, popular music, amateur theatre, and filmmaking. The Moroccan National Theatre (founded 1956) offers regular productions of Moroccan and French dramatic works. Art and music festivals take place throughout the country during the summer months, among them the World Sacred Music Festival at Fès, and the World Popular Music Festival of Marakesh.

Each region possesses its own specificities, thus contributing to the national culture and to the legacy of civilization. Morocco has set among its top priorities the protection of its diverse legacy and the preservation of its cultural heritage.

Culturally speaking, Morocco has always been successful in combining its Berber, Jewish and Arabic cultural heritage with external influences such as the French and the Spanish and, during the last decades, the Anglo-American lifestyles.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

The population of Grand Casablanca was estimated in 2005 to be 3.85 million. 98% live in urban areas. Around 25% of them are under 15 and 9% are over 60 years old. The population of the city is about 11% of the total population of Morocco. Grand Casablanca is also the largest urban area in the Maghreb. The number of inhabitants is however disputed by the locals, who point to a number between 5 and 6 million citing recent drought years as a reason for many people moving into the city to find work.

Languages: Arabic (official), Berber dialects, French widely used for business, government, and diplomacy

Ethnicity/race: Arab-Berber 99.1%, Jewish 0.2%, other 0.7%

Religions: Islam 99%, Christian 1%

National Holiday: Throne Day, July 30

Monetary unit: Dirham

CUISINE

Moroccan cuisine has long been considered as one of the most diversified cuisines in the world. This is a result of the centuries-long interaction of Morocco with the outside world. The cuisine of Morocco is mainly Berber-Moorish, European, Mediterranean cuisines. The cuisine of Morocco is essentially Berber cuisine (sometimes referred to as the Moorish cuisine). It is also influenced by the Moriscos when they took refuge in Morocco after the Spanish Reconquista. Spices are used extensively in Moroccan food. While spices have been imported to Morocco for thousands of years, many ingredients, like saffron from Tiliouine, mint and olives from Meknes, and oranges and lemons from Fez, are home-grown. Chicken is the most widely eaten meat in Morocco. The most commonly eaten red meat in Morocco is beef; lamb is preferred but expensive. Couscous is the most famous Moroccan dish along with pastilla, tajine, and harira. The most popular drink is green tea with mint, Atai.



Recommended Restaurants:

LA BODEGA

129 rue Allal Ben Abdallah (00 212 2 254 1842). This is a colorful, Spanish-style tapas bar where red neon on the walls advertises Red Bull and placemats flog Fortuna cigarettes. It's loud and hugely popular. Unbelievably, the volume increases downstairs, where there's a dimly lit basement disco.

LE PETIT ROCHE

Boulevard de la Corniche (00 212 2 236 2626). Out on a promontory a few kilometers west of the city centre, next to the El Hank lighthouse, this is a roomy first-floor lounge bar with lots of low-slung seating arrayed around similarly low-slung brass-topped tables. The restaurant serves tapas, paella and seafood, but this is primarily a drinking and dancing venue. The place also boasts the finest views of the Mosque of Hassan II, which is directly opposite across the bay.

LE ROUGET DE L'ISLE

16 rue Rouget de l'Isle (00 212 2 229 4740). Another renovated 1930s villa, although this one feels almost like a museum piece, filled with period furniture and *objets d'art*. The menu is old-school French, the cooking is terrific and the prices reasonable. The restaurant is on a leafy side street beside the Beaux Arts school; there's no nameplate, just a flight of stairs up to the first-floor entrance. With only 12 tables, reservations are a must.

LE SPHINX

13 rue Mohamed el Qorri (00 212 2 222 2594). Across from the Rialto cinema is this café where waiters in black waistcoats and bow ties serve bottles of Casablanca and glasses of *nus nus* (half black coffee, half milk) to local businessmen.

PAUL VILLA ZEVACO

Angle boulevard Moulay Rachid et boulevard d'Anfa (00 212 2 236 6000). Zevaco feels completely St Tropez. Girls in Dolce & Gabbana perch on the edge of white-canvas sofas shaded by white-canvas umbrellas while pecking at salads and savory pastries. There is more substantial fare such as pasta, crepes and a dish of the day. The Paul patisserie on the premises does takeaway snacks. You'll need to get a taxi here.

RICK'S CAFE

248 boulevard Sour Jdid (00 212 2 227 4207; www.rickscafe.ma). The movie memorabilia is kept to a minimum, allowing a beautifully restored 1930s interior to steal all the attention. The focus is an internal courtyard flanked by pointed arches and with lush potted palms in each corner. A filigree lantern hangs from a dome two storeys above. Isaam, the house pianist, happily gives in to requests for 'As Times Goes By' at least twice nightly. The menu leans towards seafood and steaks and also boasts the best burgers in town. Cocktails are served at the long bar at the rear of the restaurant.

SQALA

Boulevard des Almohades, opposite the marina (00 212 2 226 0960). The city has reclaimed a considerable amount of land from the Atlantic, so what was once a seafront fortress is now marooned on the landward side of a four-lane highway. Nevertheless, the bastion makes a fine setting for a garden café and restaurant, with a photography gallery attached. The menu features fresh seafood, fruit juices, coffees and teas. Alcohol is prohibited.

TRICA

5 rue El Moutanabi (00 212 2 222 0706; www.ilove-casablanca.com/trica). The name is just two letters short of the chic New York neighborhood that is this restaurant-bar's spiritual home. It's a great-looking place with brick walls, a copper-topped bar counter and fairy-lit back shelves. The wine list is superb and the menu includes 40 or more kinds of pasta, augmented by monthly specials

CURRENCY

The official currency of Morocco is the Moroccan Dirham, denoted as MAD or Dhs. The Moroccan Dirham is composed of 100 centimes; notes are available in denominations of (Dhs) 200, 100, 50, 20 and (very rarely now) 10 and coins are available in denominations of (Dhs) 10, 5, 2 and 1, or 50, 20, 10 and 5 centimes. Travellers should be aware that there are 4 types of 5 Dirham coin in circulation. Credit cards are accepted in major hotels as well as shopping malls. Cash and travelers cheques can be exchanged in licensed exchange offices and international hotels.

It's illegal to bring more than 1000 Dh of local currency out of the country, so you can't get dirhams outside Morocco. By law, exchange rates should be the same at all banks and official exchanges. Make a note of the exact rates before you go to make sure you're getting a fair deal.

Refer to the table below for the most recent exchange rates for some common currencies -

<http://www.oanda.com/>

100 Moroccan Dirhams =	
AUD (Australia)	13.74
CAD (Canada)	13.62
Brazil	28.82
CHF (Switzerland)	10.84
Euro (EC)	8.90
Japan	1251.68
India	763.21
USD (USA)	12.30

WEATHER

Casablanca is located in the Chawiya plain which has historically been the breadbasket of Morocco. Apart from the Atlantic coast, the Bouskoura forest is the only natural attraction in the city. The forest was planted in the 20th century and consists mostly of Eucalyptus, Palm and Pine trees. It is located halfway to the city's international airport.

Casablanca has a very mild Mediterranean climate . Casablanca's climate is strongly influenced by the cool currents of the Atlantic Ocean which tends to moderate temperature swings and produce a remarkably mild climate with little seasonal temperature variation and a lack of extreme heat and cold. Casablanca has an annual average of 74 days with significant precipitation, which amounts to 427 millimeters per year. The highest and lowest temperatures ever recorded in the city are 40.5 °C (105 °F) and -2.7 °C (27 °F), respectively. The highest amount of rainfall recorded in a single day is 178 millimeters (November 30, 2010)

LANGUAGE

Arabic (official), Berber dialects, French widely used for business, government, and diplomacy

Refer to the table below for commonly used Arabic words.

Arabic	English
Allah	God
Ab	Father
Ahlan wa sahlân	Welcome
Akh	Brother
Afwan	You are welcome (after "Thank you")
As salâm 'alekum	Hello (peace upon you) response wa 'alekum es salaem
Bint	Girl; Daughter
Habibi	My dear, my beloved, sweetheart
Na'am	Yes
Shukran	Thank you (response 'afwan)
Wa 'alekum es salaem	And hello to you (and on you peace) response to es salaem 'alekum
Yalla!	Come on!

DAILY NECESSITIES

The voltage in Morocco is generally **220 V**, and outlets will fit the **two-pin plug** known as the **Europlug**. It's probably the most commonly used international plug, found throughout continental Europe and parts of the Middle East, as well as much of Africa, South America, Central Asia and the former Soviet republics. Europlugs are included in most international **plug adapter** kits.

Watch out for American and Canadian appliances, which are made to use with 110 V. That means that even with an adapter, plugging them into a 220 V socket may damage them. If your appliance is

"dual-voltage", it should be fine (it's designed for both 110 and 220 V). If not, you'll need a **power converter** as well as an adapter.

Tap water in Morocco. is safe to drink and cook with, but most people choose to drink bottled water and to use it for making tea and coffee. Local bottled water is cheap at approximately 5 MAD/ liter bottle.

NEWSPAPERS/RADIO/TELEVISION/INTERNET

Morocco - Internet News Media

National	<u>Al Jarida Al Maghribia</u>	IN GI ENG
National	<u>Khbirate</u>	IN GI ARA
National	<u>L'Observateur</u>	IN GI FRA
National	<u>Maroc Press</u>	IN GI ARA
National	<u>Menara</u>	IN GI FRA
National	<u>Morocco Business News</u>	IN BUENG
National	<u>Morocco Mirror</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>1st Headlines</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>Africa</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>Africa Intelligence</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>Africa Intelligence</u>	IN GI FRA
Foreign	<u>Africa Time</u>	IN GI FRA
Foreign	<u>Afrik</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>Afrik</u>	IN GI FRA
Foreign	<u>Al Bawaba</u>	IN GI ARA
Foreign	<u>Al Bawaba</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>All Africa</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>All Africa</u>	IN GI FRA
Foreign	<u>Big News Network</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>EIN News</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>Index Mundi</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>Maroc Press</u>	IN GI ARA
Foreign	<u>Morocco Board</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>Morocco Daily</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>Morocco Newslite</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>Morocco World News</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>News Now</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>Relief Web</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>Topix</u>	IN GI ENG
Foreign	<u>Zawya</u>	IN BUENG

Morocco - Magazine News Media

National	<u>La Gachette du Maroc</u>	MGSR FRA
National	<u>Tel Quel</u>	MGGI FRA
Foreign	<u>Economist</u>	MGGI ENG
Foreign	<u>Jeune Afrique</u>	MGGI FRA

Morocco - Newspaper News Media

National	<u>Al Alam</u>	NPGI ARA
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National	<u>Al Massae</u>	NPGI ARA
National	<u>Assabah</u>	NPGI ARA
National	<u>Bayane Al Yaoume</u>	NPGI ARA
National	<u>Le Matin</u>	NPGI FRA

Internet & Phone:

Telecommunications in Morocco are quite advanced with accessibility -- be it from public phone booths, cellphone coverage or even VoIP -- generally good throughout the country bar the most inaccessible mountain regions. Wi-Fi is available almost everywhere.

Read more: <http://www.frommers.com/destinations/morocco/642784#ixzz2upVFTHIL>

To make domestic calls within Morocco: For all calls within Morocco, drop the country code; the full area code (including the first 0) must be dialed along with the number. All numbers in Morocco begin with a three-digit area code. Codes beginning with 052 or 053 are landline numbers; all other numbers are mobile numbers.

To make international calls from Morocco: To make international calls from Morocco, first dial 00 and then the country code (U.S. or Canada 1, U.K. 44, Ireland 353, Australia 61, New Zealand 64). Next, dial the area code (drop the first 0 if there is one) and number. For example, if you wanted to call the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., you would dial 00-1-202-588-7800.

For directory assistance & operator-assisted calls: Dial 160 for a number within Morocco, and dial 126 for numbers to all other countries.

The Prepaid Cards are available in denominations MAD 10, 20, 25, 50, 100, 200 & 500 and below are the different usage charges. Unfortunately, per-minute charges can be high

SOUVENIRS

Head to the old Medina for traditional wares such as tagines, leather goods, hookahs and other Moroccan souvenirs. Major fashion chain stores can be found in the Maarif neighbourhood, where all the big names from Zara to Prada can be found as well as designer accessories, which can be scooped up for a song. The run-down Derb Ghraleef neighbourhood, where a cluster of small stalls offer everything from cellphones to 'genuine' brand name clothing and everything in between, is an adventurous destination for serious shoppers with a basic understanding of Arabic and solid bargaining skills.

The famous Marché Central (Central Market) is a great place to pick up fresh seafood such as oysters, or Moroccan-style sausages and patés. Other handcrafts and souvenirs can be bought here too. The only. Look out for authentic Moorish silver jewellery: a wonderful idea for gifts for loved ones back home.

Most shops open at 9am, close around lunchtime and reopen around 3pm, and are usually closed all day on Sundays. Lunch hours on Fridays are often prolonged due to Friday prayers. During Ramadan, shops open later in the day and remain open at midday.

Casablanca shopping centers

1. Morocco Mall : <http://www.moroccomall.net/index.html>
2. Anfa place shopping center: <http://www.anfashopping.com/>
3. Alpha 55 shopping center

TRANSPORTATION

There are a several options for public transportation around Casablanca, and Morocco in general, which include trains, buses and taxis, both Grands Taxis for long journeys and Petits Taxis within city limits.

The train system within Morocco is one of the best that Africa has to offer. Trains are convenient, safe, fast, comfortable and fairly inexpensive. The major train station that provides services within the city of Casablanca is called Casa Voyagers. Visit [Train Travel in Morocco](#) for information about travel outside of Casablanca, including timetables, routes, fares, rules and regulations. There is also a brand new Tramway system for travel on a 32 km network within the city.

Traveling by bus around Morocco can be a great means of transportation. There are many companies. However, the safest and best company for arriving and departing Casablanca is the CTM which has its station in the centre of town in Rue Léon l'Africain.

Taxi: The main type of taxi travelling around major cities in Morocco is the shared taxi or Grand Taxi. In Casablanca this is usually a large, off white Mercedes, and will take up to six passengers to various other towns or to the airport. They also ply for hire within the city limits using pre-defined routes. Within Casablanca are the "Petit Taxis" which can be easily identified by the signs around the luggage racks and their red colour. For more information, visit [Taxi travel in Morocco](#) .

There is also the **TAXI VERT (green taxi)**: 05 22 48 48 01 you can call anytime day and night 24/7.

Casablanca International Airport

www.casablanca-airport.com

<http://www.onda.ma/ONDA/Fr/Espaces/EspacePassagers/LeReseaCasablancaroportuaireONDA/Lesaeroports/Fiches+d%E2%80%99identit%C3%A9+par+a%C3%A9roport/CASABLANCA/>

MAPS



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