



Morocco

Main City(s): Rabat (Capital), Casablanca

Language: Tamazight, Arabic, French, English

Religion: Muslim 98.5%, Christian 1.3%

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30-12:30 & 15:00-18:3

Weekend: Saturday - Sunday

Time Zone: UTC +1

Calling Code: +212

Dress Code: Dress for business meetings should be formal. Women should take care to ensure that their legs are covered below knee level.

Tipping: Tipping waiting staff is expected, usually up to 5 Dirhams or 10% for larger bills.

Embassies: Most countries are represented by embassies or consulates located in the capital city.

Power Outages: Occasionally there are power outages.

Climate: The climate varies according to season and region. The coast has a warm, Mediterranean climate. Rain falls from November to March in coastal areas. The country is mostly dry with high temperatures in summer and a cooler climate in the mountains. Average temperatures for winter are 21°C.

Accommodation: The majority of suitable expat housing is located within certain areas and there are many suitable free-standing homes monitored by personal security guards. Secure estates or "compounds" are also available, and these are also monitored by security guards or companies.

Schooling: French 'mission' schools are subsidized by the French government as well as private French schools. They both follow the French curriculum. There is one Spanish International school, an Italian International school and 4 American International schools.

Healthcare: There are good medical facilities in all main cities, including emergency pharmacies (see postings in pharmacy windows listing the nearest pharmacie du garde, or after-hours pharmacy) and clinics in major hotels outside normal opening hours. Government hospitals provide free or minimal charge emergency treatment. It is always advisable to check the current requirements with your GP or a travel clinic. However, vaccinations for Hepatitis A and Tetanus are recommended.

Shops: Morocco Mall, stretching across ten hectares of Casablanca, is North Africa's largest shopping center. Best known supermarkets: Marjane (hypermarket), Acima, Carrefour Market. There are many of these in the major towns of Morocco.

Culture: Women travelling alone can expect help and friendship, but will avoid undue attention if they cover up, ideally in local garb. Sexual relations outside marriage (including homosexual conduct) are theoretically punishable by law, but this is rarely enforced. Smoking is widespread, though sometimes limited to smoking sections in restaurants. Drinking alcohol in view of a mosque is highly disrespectful and alcohol licenses are expensive, but alcohol is often served discreetly indoors or on terraces.

Hospitality: It's not uncommon to get invited to dinner upon meeting and chatting with a Moroccan for ten minutes. If you are to visit a Moroccan household, then you should take a small gift. The Moroccans do not dress smartly when invited because it is a sign of respect. Moroccans eat their meals on a round table as high as their knee. When offered tea, it's polite to at least take a sip.

Greetings: Greetings involve a handshake and friendly inquiries after health, happiness and family, and no business is discussed until after these pleasantries. Friends may tack on a cheek air-kiss or two. Moroccan chattiness makes everyday interactions more pleasant, if longer; patience and extroversion are assets. Moroccans are extremely friendly and hospitable, and they are very generous people. Etiquette in Morocco is taken quite seriously and a person is judged by the way he behaves in public.

Money: The unit of currency is the Moroccan dirham (Dh or MAD). The easiest currencies to exchange are US dollars, UK pounds or euros. Cash can be withdrawn from ATMs in larger towns, although service in smaller towns can be erratic. Most major hotels now have more reliable ATMs. Most major credit cards are accepted in larger restaurants, hotels, guest houses and the occasional shop in the souks, with Visa and MasterCard being accepted most widely.

Transportation: Driving is on the right-hand side of the road. The main road network is in good condition. Roads have a good surface, although very narrow, in most cases only one narrow lane in each direction. The main cities are connected by toll expressways still being extended. Foreign driving licenses are accepted, as well as International Driving Permits. Third Party insurance is required.

Safety: Morocco remains a safe place but has its share of problems, these can be easily avoided should you follow common sense. Always avoid dark alleys and travel in a group whenever possible. Keep money and passports in a safety wallet or in a hotel safety deposit box. Keep personal belongings with you at all times. Make sure there is nothing important in outside or back pockets

