

# Morocco Prelude

## Entrance Requirements

### Passports

- US citizens required valid passport is for entry into Morocco.
- The passport must be valid for 6 months after your scheduled date of arrival.
- You will need two blank pages per country for entry and exit stamps in the visa section of your passport. "Two blank pages" is defined as the front and back of a page.
- If you need a new passport to be issued act now: It can take up to 6 weeks to receive your new passport. For more information contact the National Passport Information Center toll free at 877-487-2778 or visit <http://www.travel.state.gov>. Please note that extra visa pages are no longer available. If you do not have enough pages in your passport, you will need to obtain a new passport. You can request extra pages in your new passport, if you plan to travel frequently in the next 10 years.

***Advisory:** When you travel, we recommend that you make two copies of your first passport page; keep one copy at home in the unlikely event that your passport is lost, and take one copy along to use as an ID, should you leave your passport behind in the hotel safe deposit box.*

### Visa

US Citizens do not require visas for Morocco on visits of less than 90-days.

## Health & Wellness

You are going to be visiting a country with a rich and diverse cultural history but which is lacking in many of the conveniences that many of us are accustomed to. As a result, you may be exposed to some pathogens that you would not ordinarily encounter in the U.S. There are some preventative steps that you can take to help ensure that you do not bring back to your home more than your luggage, gifts, and experiences.

### Inoculations

There are no compulsory vaccinations required for entry into Morocco for those traveling from the United States. However, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) suggest that you be up to date on routine vaccines such as:

- MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis)
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Polio
- Influenza

The CDC recommends these vaccines for MOST travelers. They are NOT mandatory:

- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid

### **Additional Information:**

The CDC issues regular travel health notices on their website:

- [http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/morocco?s\\_cid=ncezid-dgmq-travel-single-001](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/morocco?s_cid=ncezid-dgmq-travel-single-001)

## **Water & Food**

Do not drink tap water. Tap water is clean but drinking from it directly should be avoided. Bottled water is recommended and available everywhere cheaply (hotels tend to provide bottled water free of charge.) Avoid using ice cubes as well. Be prepared to purchase bottled water, and carry a plastic thermos or bottle to be refilled at clean sources. Avoid eating raw vegetables, fruit which you cannot peel, and food from street vendors. Bottled water is provided for passengers in the vehicles and at each meal.

## **Physical Conditioning**

To enjoy your trip to the fullest, you should be in good physical and mental health. Your exploration of Morocco will include some walks throughout historic sites where walking surfaces may be on loose soil or uneven stone or gravel walkways. Walks can last several hours but are given at a decent pace in order to closely explore and observe. Always bring along water and a good hat to protect yourself during these adventures.

## **Travel Insurance & Medical Evacuation**

We recommend that you consider a Trip Cancellation policy that also includes medical coverage and evacuation against unforeseen circumstances.

## **Climatic Conditions**

### **Altitude**

Morocco has a Mediterranean climate in the north and a desert climate in the south. In general, it rarely rains in Morocco, and then primarily in the winter months. It also tends to rain slightly more in the north of the country than in the south, although this variation is subtle. Broadly speaking, there are four climate "zones" in Morocco – the coast, the mountains, the desert, and the country's interior. Along the coast of Morocco the weather is typically very mild. In the north, you can occasionally encounter cool and mildly wet undertones – somewhat similar to that of San Francisco.

### **Altitude Chart: (Feet)**

Erfoud	2,648
Fez	1,358
Marrakech	1,528
Meknes	1,801
Ouarzazate	3,717
Rabat	246

### **Temperature**

Mountainous Rwanda has been dubbed “the country of a thousand hills” and is good to visit any time of the year. When gorilla trekking, it’s not uncommon to encounter rain. After, you are in the rainforest and it rains quite a lot, but that will not stop you from trekking to see the gorillas. The rainy season overall in the country follows the East Africa pattern – long rains from mid-March through May, and short rains in November. Gorilla viewing is actually better during the rainy season, as they are generally at lower elevations, feeding, and can be viewed with less trekking.

Average Temperature (°F)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Erfoud	47/67	48/69	52/75	63/87	70/90	79/100	85/106	84/104	78/96	67/85	54/70	46/62
Fez	47/59	45/57	50/61	54/67	58/71	65/81	73/100	79/99	73/88	70/84	59/71	48/59
Marrakech	43/64	47/67	50/72	53/74	57/80	62/87	69/97	69/97	66/90	59/80	52/72	45/66
Meknes	42/59	45/60	47/64	49/66	53/72	60/80	66/80	66/89	62/84	56/73	49/66	45/61
Ouarzazate	34/65	38/68	44/74	50/81	56/88	63/98	68/104	69/102	62/93	53/81	45/72	36/63
Rabat	46/62	49/63	50/66	52/67	56/71	61/74	65/80	65/80	64/79	58/74	53/69	49/64
Average Rainfall (inches):	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Erfoud	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.9	1.6	0.4	0.1	0.5
Fez	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.5	1.4	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.5	1.8	2.7	2.9
Marrakech	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.3	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.8	1.5	1.1
Meknes	3.1	2.9	3.0	2.7	1.5	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.5	2.0	2.9	3.6
Ouarzazate	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5
Rabat	3.2	2.7	2.6	2.2	1.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.8	3.3	4.0

## **Recommended Packing List**

### **Clothing**

- Long-sleeved shirts to protect you from sunburn
- Long trousers/slacks or a long skirt
- Good quality sunglasses (preferably polarized).
- Sun hat with a brim
- Scarf or shawl to cover bare arms and shoulders
- Good walking shoes (running/tennis shoes are fine)
- Sandals or rubber flip/flops for poolside
- Swimsuit with light cover-up garment
- Lightweight jersey for cooler mornings
- A set of smart casual evening wear

### **Toiletries**

- Personal toiletries (basic amenities supplied by many establishments)
- Moisturizing cream & suntan lotion
- Insect repellent e.g. Tabard, Rid, Jungle Juice, OFF, etc.

- Basic medical kit (aspirins, plasters, Imodium, antiseptic cream, and Anti-histamine cream, etc.)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Packaged wet tissues ("Wash & Dry" "Wet Ones")
- If you wear contact lenses, we recommend that you bring along a pair of glasses in case you get irritation
- Reading glasses
- Small sewing kit

### **Other Things To Pack**

- Visas, tickets, passports, money, etc.
- Backpack to use during the day as you tour
- A small flashlight with extra batteries
- Adapter plugs & converters for electrical appliances
- A tiny calculator for estimating cost while shopping
- Binoculars
- Reading material
- Journal with pen

### **Camera Equipment**


- Camera, memory cards and chargers
- Lenses, cleaning fluid, lens tissue
- Waterproof/dustproof bags/cover for your camera

### **Tips on Clothing**

Morocco has been described as the "the coolest of the hot countries" and the apparent paradox is most apt to the climate of Morocco. Although more relaxed than many Muslim countries, visitors to Morocco should still dress conservatively. Women should cover shoulders, arms and legs. Take light trousers (or long skirts), long-sleeved cotton shirts and, for winter or desert trips, a warm sweater and even a hat. In the cities of Marrakech and Casablanca, Moroccan men and women often dress as they would on the streets of London or New York. However, outside of the cities, we recommend that you follow the local tradition where both men and women cover themselves from the knee to the elbow. Some religious sites do not allow shorts or sleeveless shirts. Comfortable, broken-in shoes are recommended. A light windproof jacket is useful on the coast and a fleece jacket or warm sweater is needed for spring and autumn desert nights. For the winter months, a warm coat, a hat, gloves and wool socks are essential.

### **Power & Connectivity**

#### **At a Glance**

Voltage	220 Volts / 50Hz
Adapter Type C	

Adapter Type E



## **Cell Phones**

Many travelers bring along their cell phones, not only for connecting to the internet and making phone calls, but for the easy to use camera functions. If you plan on using it as a phone keep in mind North American phones may not in Morocco, particularly in remote areas. Check with your service provider to determine if you can purchase a plan, or if your phone can be “unlocked”. If it can, you should be able to purchase inexpensive prepaid SIM cards.

***Advisory:** As most people travel to “get away from it all,” some limitations on the use of these phones when on tour need to be set. We suggest the following guidelines on the use of cell phones:*

1. *Keep the ring tone at a low volume to avoid disturbing other guests.*
2. *Use your phone in the privacy of your room and not any of the common areas: dining room, bar/lounge area, or on any of the vehicles.*
3. *Use your phone for outgoing calls and to check messages only. Incoming calls, and the loud ringing that ensues, should be curtailed.*

## **Time**

The time in Morocco is six hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (New York City) while the U.S. observes Daylight Savings Time (from the first Sunday in April to the last Sunday in October) and seven hours ahead of EST the rest of the year. Morocco does not observe Daylight Savings Time.

## **Equipment**

### **Cameras**

From smartphones to SLR cameras, digital photography has now made it simpler than ever to preserve the memories experienced during once-in-a-lifetime adventures. Most digital cameras use either an SD (secure digital) card or a CF (compact flash) card that comes in a variety of storage capacities ranging from 2-128 GB (gigabytes). Depending on the megapixel size of your particular camera and the format in which you choose to shoot your images, an 8GB card can hold as few as 200 images shot in RAW format (normally shot by pros and serious amateurs) to just over 2000 images shot as JPEGs (most common format shot by enthusiasts). For those cameras with megapixels higher than 12, it is recommended that at least 4-8GB cards are used and that you should always bring more than one card in case of card failure or corruption (rare but possible). If you are bringing a laptop, external USB hard drives of 1-2 TB (terabytes) are compact, relatively inexpensive, and an excellent way to store tens of thousands of images. In addition to ensuring that you bring the charger and adaptor/converter for the location to where you are traveling, it is highly recommended that you bring at least one spare, fully charged battery for your camera. There may be locations where dependable power is not available for charging and spare batteries may prove to be invaluable and help ensure that you don’t miss any photo opportunities.

## **Video**

Charging facilities for video AND digital cameras should be available in every camp or lodge on the safari, as long as you have a standard charger that will plug into 220 volts. Please bring along enough batteries to last you at least three days of filming.

## **Binoculars**

There will be an opportunity to observe some of the natural treasures of Namibia. Binoculars will add immeasurably to your viewing enjoyment. Preferably, binoculars should be at least 8 power (8x) and have a wide field of view to allow you to quickly find whatever it is you want to see. Some binoculars have the added advantage of "gathering light," making objects brighter in dim morning and evening conditions. This light-gathering capability is determined by a measurement called the "exit pupil", which is calculated by dividing the diameter of the front (objective) lens in millimeters by the power (8x, for example). These two measurements are commonly designated on binoculars as a measurement such as 8x42, which translates to 8 power with a 42 mm objective lens. The exit pupil in this instance is  $42/8$ , or 5.25. Since the human eye can process light delivered by an exit pupil of about 4.0, these binoculars will appear bright even in dim light.

Some very small binoculars are relatively inexpensive, such as 8x21. With a very narrow field of view (usually about 400 feet at 1,000 yards) and an exit pupil of only  $21/8 = 2.6$ , these binoculars are designed for viewing stationary objects in bright light, such as at the opera, and are poorly designed for looking at wildlife. You will be far happier with binoculars designated in the range of 8x40 to 10x50.

## **Money Matters**

Many small shops and markets throughout Morocco deal only in cash. US dollars are NOT commonly accepted. Cash also works well in the souks (marketplaces), where bargaining is expected.

It is advisable to carry some cash in small denominations of US Dollars for purchases outside urban areas, and for tipping. Please note that foreign exchange bureaus, banks and hotels will only accept U.S. dollars minted in or after 2006 with no rips or markings.

Exchange of U.S. Dollars can be made at banks and hotels in major cities or at a foreign exchange kiosk at the airport where, time permitting; you might wish to exchange some currency upon arrival. However, since you will be met upon arrival at the airport and transferred to your hotel, you will not need any local currency before you reach the hotel, where you can easily obtain it.

When exchanging currency, be aware that poorer exchange rates are given on smaller denominations of U.S. \$20 or smaller.

## **Currency**

The Moroccan currency is the Dirham (exchanged as MAD or Dhs) divided into 100 centimes. There are 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 DH notes and coins in denominations of 5, 10 and 20 centimes and  $\frac{1}{2}$ , 1, 2, 5 and 10 dirham. You can only obtain Dirhams in Morocco.

In preparation for your journey, you may want to calculate the exchange rate from the U.S. dollar to local currencies. There are many websites that offer a conversion engine. You can also check the Wall Street Journal for currency rate information.

## **Credit Cards/ATMs**

MasterCard and Visa are accepted at tourist friendly shops and restaurants but beware that a surcharge will be applied to cover the processing fees. Establishments that do accept credit cards as a form of payment will commonly accept MasterCard and Visa, but American Express, Discover or Diners Club. It

is wise to alert your credit card company that you will be traveling in Morocco so that your charges will not be flagged as fraudulent. Also, be aware of any fees that may be applied to your purchases by your bank or credit card company.

**Note:** As there is a potential for fraud anywhere in the world, we highly recommend that you do not use your debit cards overseas and exercise caution when using your credit cards. Do not let the card out of your sight and if a vendor tries to take the card into a back room, ask for your card back immediately and refrain from using it. Keep your valuables on you, including passports and credit cards, or locked in the safety deposit boxes when provided.

### **Shopping:**

Shopping is wonderful in Morocco, renowned for its Berber jewelry, hand-woven carpets, leather goods, fine metalwork, and decorative pottery. Prices are rarely fixed so be prepared to negotiate. Bargaining is a legitimate part of the Moroccan shopping experience – it is most commonly accepted in outdoor markets. There are guidelines to consider when bargaining. Tailor your bargaining to the situation – offering 40% of the asking price may be too much or too little, depending on where the seller started. Decide what the item is actually worth to you, and use that as a benchmark. Do not appear overly eager, instead point out imperfections in the item, or mention that you saw the item elsewhere at a lower price. Walk away when the seller has quoted a "minimum" price. Do not try to bargain in supermarkets or established stores.

You may wish to avoid the street vendors, some of whom can be very aggressive. A visit to the souk (a local market with a great diversity of items) to explore hundreds of tiny shops, share a glass of mint tea with the merchants, examine the variety and quality of the craftsmanship and haggle for a bargain, takes time. Enjoy it, it can be a lot of fun. Please note that it is considered inappropriate to offer money (or anything else to anyone) with your left hand.

The larger cities have sophisticated shops that sell clothing, electronics and jewelry etc., much of it imported from Europe. There are also shopping centers that sell brand-name food, pharmaceuticals and household goods.

## **Code of Conduct**

### **Meeting & Greeting**

When Moroccans greet each other they take their time and converse about their families, friends, and other general topics. Handshakes are the customary greeting between individuals of the same sex.

### **Dining Etiquette**

If you are invited to a Moroccan's house, you should remove your shoes and dress smartly. Doing so demonstrates respect towards your hosts. Do not begin eating until the host blesses the food or begins to eat. Expect to be urged to take more food off the communal plate. Providing an abundance of food is a sign of hospitality.

### **Dress**

Although more relaxed than many Muslim countries, visitors to Morocco should still dress conservatively. Women should cover shoulders, arms and legs. In the cities of Marrakech and Casablanca, Moroccan men and women often dress as they would on the streets of London or New York. However, outside of the cities, we recommend that you follow the local tradition where both men and women cover themselves from the knee to the elbow. Some religious sites do not allow shorts or sleeveless shirts.