

## FAQs

- **Voltage conversions** The voltage in Morocco is generally 220 V, and outlets will fit the two-pin plug known as the Europlug. Europlugs are included in most international plug adapter kits. 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.
- **Currency conversions** The local currency is the **Moroccan dirham** (Dh or MAD), which is divided into 100 centimes.

As of November 2013: \$1=Dh8.32.

There are 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, Dh 1, Dh 2, Dh 5, Dh 10 coins, although coins smaller than 20c are rarely seen these days. Notes are available in denominations of Dh 20, Dh 50, Dh 100, and Dh 200.

Don't expect to see many banks in the *souqs* or *medinas*, although in larger cities there are often an ATM near the main gates, and even one or two inside the large souqs.

You can exchange at the hotels as well and exchange offices, major post offices provide exchange, There are several exchange offices in major cities airports.

- **Credit Cards**

Only a relatively small number of businesses in Morocco accept credit cards. Those that do are most likely to accept Visa or MasterCard however will often apply a surcharge to cover the cost of processing your transaction.

Advise your bank or card issuer that you intend to travel abroad so that no block will be put on the usage of your credit or ATM cards. Notify the issuer and give them a 'phone number where you can be contacted abroad.

Before travelling, ensure you make a note of all credit card numbers and associated contact numbers for card issuers in case of difficulty. The numbers are usually free to call as you can reverse the charges, make it clear to the operator at your hotel, riad etc that you wish the call charge to be reversed. Preferably get a pre-paid card, with good exchange rates and low withdrawal fees eg fairFX.

When making payments with a credit card, for example at a hotel for services, it is vital to memorise the PIN as signatures in many instances are no longer accepted, however certain establishments such as restaurants may still use the old method of signing.

Many people now use a prepaid FairFX or Caxton card. These offer good exchange rates, are safe and money is protected if the card gets lost or stolen. These are accepted in Moroccan ATMs anywhere you see the Mastercard logo and in some shops too.

- **Tipping** There are no rules to tipping unlike in America where you leave some 15 to 20% , some restaurant add service charge to the bill, just check it before you leave anything, for drivers who stay the whole trip with you, we recommend a \$100, other guides for the day 10 to 15 dh (\$2) at cafes 2or 3 dhs
- **Packing list** for each itinerary **(THIS IS AFTER WE SELL IT?)**
- **Visa information** **No visa is required for American staying less than 3 months**
- **Talk**

Arabic

Salam Allykoune Peace on you, for Hello and goodbye

Sbah Alkhir Good Morning

Msaa Alkhir Good night

- **Eat**

### **Couscous**

Made from semolina grains and steamed in a colander-like dish known as a *couscoussière* is the staple food for most Moroccans, and is probably the best known Moroccan meal. It can be served as an accompaniment to a stew or *tagine*, or mixed with meat and vegetables and presented as a main course. Almost all Moroccan restaurants uphold the tradition of serving couscous on Fridays.

***Tagine*** (or *tajine*),

a spicy stew of meat and vegetables that has been simmered for many hours in a conical clay pot (from which the dish derives its name). Restaurants offer dozens of variations (from Dh 25 in budget restaurant) including chicken *tagine* with lemon and olives, honey-sweetened lamb or beef, fish or prawn *tagine* in a spicy tomato sauce. There are many variations of this dish.

### **Pastilla,**

made by layering thin pieces of flakey dough between sweet, spiced meat filling (often lamb or chicken, but most enjoyably pigeon) and layers of almond-paste filling. The dough is wrapped into a plate-sized pastry that is baked and coated with a dusting of powdered sugar.

*Harira*, a delicious soup made from lentils, chick peas, lamb stock, tomatoes and vegetables.

*Bissara*, a thick glop made from Feva Beans and a generous wallop of olive oil can be found bubbling away near markets and in medinas in the mornings.

Many cafes, bakeries and restaurants also offer good value *petit déjeuner* breakfast deals, which basically include a tea or coffee, orange juice (*jus d'Orange*) and a croissant or bread with marmalade from Dh 10.

- **Snacks and fast food**

Snackers are well catered for in Morocco. **Rotisserie chicken** shops abound, where you can get a quarter chicken served with fries and salad for around Dh 20. **Sandwiches** (from Dh 10) served from rotisserie chicken shops or hole-in-the-wall establishments are also popular. These fresh crusty baguettes are stuffed with any number of fillings including tuna, chicken, *brochettes* and a variety of salads.

### Drink

**As a rule, do not drink tap water at all in Morocco, even in hotels, as it contains much higher levels of minerals than the water in America and Europe. For local people this is not a problem as their bodies are used to this and can cope, but for travelers, drinking the tap water will usually result in illness. Generally this is not serious, an upset stomach being the only symptom, but it is enough to spoil a day or two of your holiday.**

Although a predominantly Muslim country, Morocco is **not dry**.

Alcohol is available in restaurants, liquor stores, bars, supermarkets, clubs, hotels and discos. The local brews of Beers are full flavored lagers and enjoyable with the local cuisine or as a refreshment. Also you can find local judeo-berber vodka “Eau de Vie or Mahya in Arabic”, mild anise flavored and brewed from figs.

Bottled water is widely available. Popular brands of water include Oulmes (sparkling) and Sidi Ali, Sidi Harazem and Ain Saiss DANONE (still). The latter has a slightly mineral and metallic taste. Nothing with a high mineralization produced (so far?).

- **What to wear**

If you are travelling in winter and heading for the south through the Atlas Mountains, be prepared for bitterly cold nights, good winter jacket and warm clothes is much recommended, however the spring is the best time to go to Morocco (March, April and May) when the country is lush and green, the flowers are out, the smell of the roses is in the air especially in the south, but make sure you make hotel arrangements in advance as

it is considered the peak season. The weather in September, October and November season is beautiful as well (less greens and flowers) after the summer heat eases up. For these two periods, summer clothes with some light jacket are advisable.

Do not pack too heavy if you are moving a lot through the country. Kakis and jeans for both ladies and gentlemen, no need for scarves are needed, unless you are planning on visiting mosques (only Casablanca mosque is open for visits) or feel like you want to respect the local culture.

## **Telephone**

- 1) **Public telephones** can be found in city centers, but private **telephone offices** (also known as *teleshops* or *telekiosques*) are also commonly used. The international dialling prefix (to dial *out* of the country) is 00, but international rates are comparatively expensive. If you have a lot of phone calls to make, it may be worth ducking into the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta or Melilla.
- 2) **Useful Numbers** Police: 19; Fire Service: 15; Highway Emergency Service: 177; Information: 160; International Information: 120; Telegrams and telephone: 140; Intercity: 100.
- 3) The GSM **mobile telephone** network in Morocco can be accessed via one of two major operators: Meditel or Maroc Telecom. Prepaid cards are available. More info on available services, coverage and roaming partners are available at: GSMWorld

It is very easy and cheap to buy a local GSM prepaid card in one of the numerous phone shops showing a Maroc Telecom sign. The SIM card (carte Jawal) costs only 30 DH (3 €) with 10 DH (1 €) airtime. The rate is national: 3-4 DH, to Europe ca. 10 DH, SMS 3 DH. The card is valid 6 months after the last recharge.

- **Post**

The Moroccan postal service is generally reliable and offers a *post restante* service in major cities for a small fee. You will need some identification (preferably your passport) to collect your mail.

Items shipped as **freight** are inspected at the post office before they are sent, so wait until this has been done before you seal the box.

Don't leave postcards with the small post office at Marrakech Airport as they'll never be delivered, despite taking your money for postage stamps. Postboxes on streets seemed to be a more reliable means to send postcards.

- **Email & internet**

Moroccans have really taken to the internet. **Internet cafes** are open late and are numerous in cities and smaller towns that see significant tourist traffic. Rates are about 4 - 10 dirhams per hour and they are often located next to, above, or below the *telekiosque*

offices. Speeds are acceptable to excellent in the north, but can be a little on the slow side in rural areas. Most internet cafes will allow you to print and burn CDs for a small charge.

Moroccans have also really taken to 3G coverage. There is excellent access to email and the internet via Mobile Phones and it is relatively cheap. There is 3G access throughout the mountains and in the desert, as well as in all cities.