

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP Delicacy made in Morocco

Take the chance to try some unique *argan oil*, a local product made only in the region around Agadir from the fruit of the indigenous argan tree (photo right) → p. 31

INSIDER TIP For cavers

You can see some impressive caves and grottoes in the *Gorges du Zegzel* in the foothills of the Middle Atlas → p. 35

INSIDER TIP Shopping for one dirham

In the *Souk at the Bab el Khemis* in Marrakech's northern medina, you can buy all sorts of delights for just one dirham! → p. 58

INSIDER TIP Fresh, fresher, freshest, Chez Brahim

Freshly caught, top-quality fish can be savoured at the little *Chez Brahim* restaurant in Tamraght → p. 73

INSIDER TIP A veranda to while away the hours

The suite veranda of Sally Haggis's small bed and breakfast in Mirleft offers a spectacular view of the sea, beach and cliffs around → p. 75

INSIDER TIP Living like a pasha

At the *Dar Mayssane* in Rabat you can bask in luxury that would once have the preserve of the local pasha → p. 68

INSIDER TIP Pomegranate farm for eco-fans

This delightful guesthouse stands in the middle of a small farm in Oulad Teima. Everything is ecological and child-friendly; even the vegetables are home-grown in the farm's garden → p. 74

INSIDER TIP Experiencing a fortified granary

In Tizougane you can stay in an authentic *agadir*, or fortified granary, where you'll be really well looked after → p. 81

INSIDER TIP Hip industrial district

Those looking to explore a wholly different side of Marrakech should head to *Sidi Ghanem*, a Moroccan-style industrial district with an array of designer boutiques and cool bistros → p. 56

INSIDER TIP Life in the Valley of the Fortunate

In the *Vallée des Heureux* or *Ait Bougmezz* in the High Atlas, time seems to have stood still → p. 106

INSIDER TIP Dining in the old palace

Enjoy Moroccan-Italian fusion cuisine in a majestic setting at *Pepe Nero* in Marrakech, housed in an old palace → p. 57

INSIDER TIP A sea of desert palms

Experience authentic oasis-living in the company of friendly people, and way off the beaten track, at the magical oasis of *Figuiq* right by the Algerian border → p. 86

INSIDER TIP Impressive cliffs

When the tide is out at *Legzira* beach, you can walk through the enormous natural arches and watch the fishermen as they prepare their catch of the day (photo left) → p. 77

INSIDER TIP Following in the Berber footsteps

Id Aïssa, one of the last remaining and oldest Berber buildings in the world and Morocco's oldest fortified granary, stands at a majestic clifftop height overlooking the southern edge of the Anti-Atlas → p. 80

INSIDER TIP Dining pleasure in the ruined garden

If you're looking for a trendy yet affordable and tasty place to eat, head to *The Ruined Garden* on an old site on the edge of the old city in Fès which offers a choice of daily specials to enjoy → p. 10



BEST OF...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● *Marabout in Sidi Kaouki*

A marabout refers to the small domed shrine housing the grave of a saint which is always accessible and is said to possess special powers. Built right on the beach and lapped by the sea at high tide, the *Marabout Sidi Kaouki* in the village of the same name is particularly striking → p. 47

● *Museum village of Ait Ben Haddou*

An entire village for a film set and museum – and for free. *Ait Ben Haddou* is situated on a hillside near Ouarzazate at the edge of the High Atlas. It is a World Heritage Site and definitely worth seeing → p. 90

● *National Parks*

Morocco has several national parks, and they are all freely accessible. Visitors can follow the set routes and paths and experience some of the great outdoors Morocco has to offer. The *Jbel Tazeka* and *Oued Massa* are especially impressive → p. 51, 76

● *Open-air theatre*

The fishing harbour of Essaouira could hardly be more picturesquely situated. In the mornings it's fun to go and watch the *fish auctions*. They take place right at the quayside and are free for spectators → p. 44

● *Artistic murals*

Asilah is not a museum village and doesn't have an established art scene like the much more touristy Essaouira, but it's a small artistic centre nonetheless. Here though, works are exhibited not in galleries or museums but very openly as free-to-view murals on the façades of houses (photo) → p. 40

● *Acrobatics and snake charmers*

Delve into the heart of Marrakech and be entertained like in *One Thousand and One Nights*: snake charmers, story-tellers, fire-eaters or acrobats all perform for free in the evenings on the *Jemaa el Fna* – just offer a small contribution to keep this spectacle going! → p. 53

● ● ● ● Dots in guidebook refer to "Best of..." tips

ONLY IN MOROCCO

Unique experiences

● *Tajines by the roadside*

Travellers can't fail to spot these unique clay pots with the cone-shaped lids, in which meat and vegetables stew. They tend to taste best where the locals sit down to eat, namely at the small and simple street cafés, such as in *Kelaat M'Gouna* → p. 92

● *Living in the kasbah*

Time was when these imposing mud castles were falling into decay, because they didn't match the Moroccans' perception of modern living. Now, you can stay the night in them – authentic and in style! Especially recommended is the kasbah *Tomboctou* in Tinghir → p. 94

● *Tea time*

Thé à la menthe – sweet mint tea – is Morocco's national drink. Preparing and serving it involves a certain ritual and etiquette. Having said that, in the *Maison Traditionelle* in Oumesnat the tea is served together with "Berber Nutella" (honey, almonds and argan oil) → p. 81

● *Camels on the beach*

Camel riding is great fun, but when you do it with a sea breeze in your hair it's even better! You can book rides and even safaris lasting several days at a number of places, including the *Ranch de Diabat* near Essaouira → p. 45

● *Drums in the desert*

Staying out in the desert is a unique experience. There is the unending vastness and the tranquillity, not to mention the cute camels. Tranquillity? Hold on a minute! Things only get quiet here late at night, after the camel drivers have stopped beating their drums – that's desert music for you → p. 113

● *Gnaoua Festival*

It only lasts a couple of days, but it's so colourful, noisy and exciting that many Europeans only travel to Morocco to attend the *Gnaoua Festival*. Each year in late June, the city of Essaouira is transformed into one enormous music venue as thousands of people make the pilgrimage here to chill out to the mystic melodies (photo) → p. 121



ONLY IN

DISCOVERY TOURS

1

MOROCCO AT A GLANCE



START: 1 Marrakech
END: 1 Marrakech

Distance:
🚗 2,988 km/1,857 miles

11 days
Driving time
(without stops)
47 hours



COSTS: for 2 people: approx. 12,000 dh per person (rental car, petrol, accommodation, B&B), guided tours 165–275 dh for half a day (city, hikes, bird wildlife conservation area), 220 dh for 2 hours (boat trip and camel tour)

WHAT TO PACK: camera, swimwear, binoculars, hiking shoes

IMPORTANT TIPS: In rural areas many of the roads are single track. Avoid driving at night as the roads are dimly lit, making it difficult to see pedestrians and animals. To help you find hotel accommodation in cities, it's worth taking a taxi which you can follow in the rental car (max. 50 dh).

Every corner of the earth has its own special charm. If you want to explore all the many different facets of this region, head off the beaten track or get tips for the best stops, breathtaking views, hand-picked restaurants or the best local activities, then these customised discovery tours are just the right thing. Choose the best route for the day and follow in the footsteps of the MARCO POLO authors – well-prepared to navigate your way to all the many highlights that await you along the tour.

Explore the diversity of Morocco on this tour which takes you to the country's most beautiful and interesting locations from imperial cities to the popular city of Marrakech and the desert.

From 1 Marrakech → p. 51 follow the A7 to 2 Casablanca → p. 68. You should definitely take the guided tour around the splendid **Mosquée Hassan II** → p. 68! It is then a labyrinth to find your way out of the city. Follow the signs to the A3 to 3 Rabat → p. 64. Rabat is an imperial city which combines oriental flair with French savoir-

DAY 1

1 Marrakech

(242 km/150 mi)

2 Casablanca

(101.5 km/63 mi)

3 Rabat

