

Visit of Marrakech



Map of Marrakech



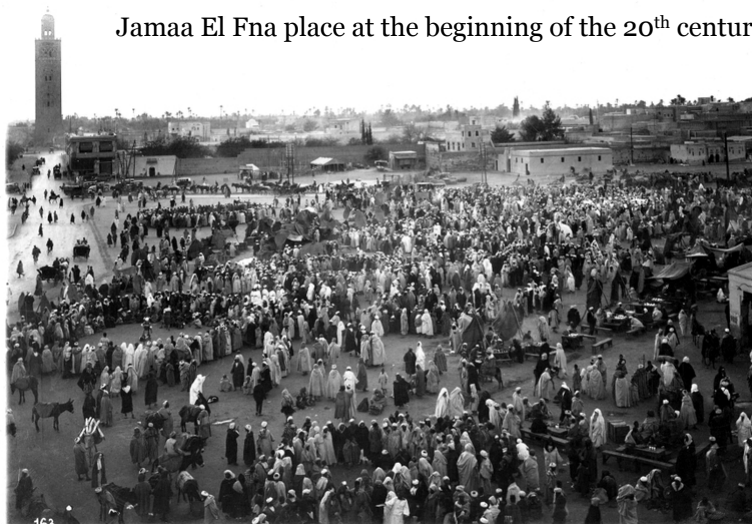
Djemma el Fna place

The Djemma el Fna is really the heart of Marrakech. It is a large central square in the old city (Medina) and during the day it's a perfect place to grab a freshly-squeezed orange juice and a handful of dates. At the end of the afternoon the Djemma el Fna transforms into an entertainment paradise -- if you're in to snake charming, juggling, music and that sort of thing. Snack stalls are replaced with stalls offering more substantial fare and the square comes alive with entertainment that hasn't changed much since medieval times.

The Djemma el Fna is surrounded by cafe's overlooking the square so you can just relax and watch the world go by if you're tired of jostling the crowds below. Be prepared to be asked for money when you take photos of the performers and stop to watch the entertainment.



Jamaa El Fna place at the beginning of the 20th century



Majorelle garden and the Museum of Islamic Art:



In the 1920's, French artists Jacques and Louis Majorelle created a stunning garden in the middle of Marrakech's new town. The Majorelle gardens are filled with color, plants of all shapes and sizes, flowers, fish ponds and perhaps the most pleasing aspect, tranquility. The designer Yves Saint Laurent now owns the gardens and has also built himself a house on the property. The building that gets most of the attention however is the bright blue and yellow building the Marjorelles used as their studio and which now houses the Museum of Islamic Art. This small museum includes some good examples of Moroccan tribal art, carpets, jeweler, and pottery.

The gardens and museum are *open daily* with a two-hours break at lunch time (from 12-2 pm).



Ali Ben Youssef Medersa and Mosque:

The Medersa has been built during the 16th Century by the Saadians and could house up to 900 religious students. The architecture is beautifully preserved and you can explore the tiny rooms where the students use to live. The mosque is adjacent to the Medersa.

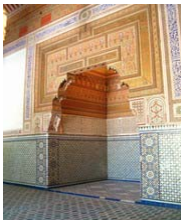


The Ramparts of Marrakech

The walls of the medina have been standing since the 13th century and make for a wonderful early morning stroll. Each gate is a work of art in themselves and the walls run for twelve miles. The Bab ed-Debbagh gate is the entry point for the **tanneries** and provides an excellent photo opportunity full of vivid colours from the dyes used. It is a little smelly though.



El Bahia Palace,



This palace is a wonderful example of the best of Moroccan architecture. There are a lot of detail, arches, light, engravings and what's more it was built as a harem's residence, which makes it even more interesting. The palace is open daily with a break for lunch although it is closed when the royal family visits.



Souqs :

- The souqs are basically undercover markets that sell everything from chickens to high-quality crafts. The souqs of Marrakech are considered to be among the best in Morocco, so if you like shopping and bargaining you'll enjoy yourself tremendously. Even if you don't like shopping, the souqs are a cultural experience you wouldn't want to miss. Souqs are divided in to small areas that specialize in a certain good or trade. The metal workers all have their little shops clustered together, as do the tailors, butchers, jewelers, wool dyers, spice merchants, carpet salesmen and so on.
- The souqs are situated north of the Djemma el Fna and finding your way around the narrow alleyways can be a bit tricky. Guides are plentiful in Marrakech, so you can always use those services, but getting lost in the chaos is also part of the fun. It's often more interesting to peek in to souqs where local wares are being produced, than to be taken to yet another carpet shop by your guide. If you get lost, just ask for directions back to the Djemma el Fna.



Enjoy your stay
at Marrakech

*The 14th conference of AIM – June 10th-12th, 2009 -
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