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CHAPTER 1: PROFILE

Introduction

Morocco’s coastal location and proximity to the European continent have shaped its history. The region has experienced many successive waves of diverse cultures, from migrating tribes and refugees to invading or occupying forces and foreign merchants. After centuries of often tumultuous dynastic or imperial rule and colonial occupation, Morocco is a growing and developing country governed by a constitutional monarchy.¹, ² Economic initiatives and governmental reforms continue to modernize the nation and raise its standard of living, although the country still suffers from substantial rates of poverty and unemployment.³, ⁴, ⁵, ⁶ Despite increasing socioeconomic change, the country retains the strong cultural traditions of its Arab and indigenous Imazighen (Berber) populations, who predominately practice Islam.⁷

Geography

Area

Located on the northwestern coast of Africa, Morocco lies directly south of Spain across the Strait of Gibraltar, where the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea meet. The expansive coastline of the country’s western and northern borders adjoins these two bodies of water, making Morocco the only African country with direct access to the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Although mainland Spain lies 13 km (8 mi) north across the strait, Morocco shares land boundaries with the European country at two small Spanish-controlled properties on the northern Moroccan coast: Ceuta and Melilla. (Morocco disputes the Spanish claims to these two regions, which are nonetheless administered by Spain.) To the east, Morocco shares an extensive land boundary with Algeria, its largest neighbor. On its southern edge, it borders Western Sahara, the site of continued territorial disputes between Morocco and the Polisario Front. With a total land

area of 446,550 sq km (172,413 sq mi), Morocco is slightly larger than the state of California.8, 9, 10

**Topography**

Morocco’s terrain comprises coastal plains and lowlands rising to extensive high-elevation mountain ranges, interspersed with plateaus and valleys. In the southern and eastern areas of the country, the central mountains descend to plains as the topography transforms into desert.11

Morocco’s Atlantic coast, where the majority of the population resides, largely consists of fertile plains and plateaus that extend east to the mountainous interior. The Rif Mountains rise dramatically from the northern coast to run roughly parallel to the Mediterranean, from the northern coastal city of Tangier to the Moulouya River basin in the east. In the central region of the country, three ranges of the Atlas Mountains (Middle, High, and Anti-Atlas) run parallel to each other on a slanted, southwest-to-northeast line. Located in the High Atlas Mountains is Mt. Toubkal, the tallest peak in North Africa at 4,165 m (13,665 ft). In southern and eastern Morocco, the Atlas Mountains gradually slope to meet the arid and semiarid plateaus and plains that form the northwestern border of the Sahara. Sebkha Tah, which at 55 m (180 ft) below sea level is Morocco’s lowest point, can be found in the far south.12

**Rivers**

The waterways and recurrent runoff spawned by Morocco’s high mountain ranges have provided it with the most elaborate system of rivers in North Africa.13 The Sebou River runs 450 km (280 mi) north from the Middle Atlas Mountains and then east into the Atlantic, carrying the highest volume of water of the country’s rivers.14 The Moulouya River also originates in the Middle Atlas

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Mountains and flows 515 km (320 mi) northeast to the Mediterranean. Though numerous small streams flow into the Mediterranean, the Moulouya is the only substantial river in Morocco to empty into that sea. The Oum al-Rbia, at 555 km (345 mi) in length, is Morocco’s longest river and serves as an important resource for irrigation and hydroelectric power over its course from the Middle Atlas Mountains to the Atlantic. Several small but important rivers flow in a southerly direction from the High Atlas Mountains toward the Sahara; these include the Ziz, the Rheris, the Guir, the Drâa, and the Dadès. Although most of Morocco’s rivers are largely not navigable, they are heavily utilized for irrigation and hydroelectric power generation.

Climate

Morocco’s climate is largely influenced by two forces: the Atlantic oceanic winds that blow from the west and the arid conditions of the Sahara to the southeast. The Rif and Atlas mountains in the northern and central regions act as a barrier between these two climatic pressures. A subtropical, Mediterranean climate characterized by mild, rainy winters and hot, arid summers dominates the western and northern regions. In the south and east, the rain shadow effect created by the mountainous interior limits precipitation and produces the hot, semiarid conditions of the pre-Sahara. Precipitation in the Atlantic coastal region is moderate. The area’s rainy season typically runs from October to April or May, with the northwest receiving the highest level of precipitation. Inland, rain and snowfall occur at higher elevations in the Rif and Atlas mountains, which are often snow-capped during the winter months.

On the Atlantic coast, average temperatures range from 18º to 28ºC (64º to 82ºF) in the summer and 8º to 17ºC (46º to 63ºF) in the winter. Occasionally, summer winds blown in over the mountains from the Sahara can push the temperature as high as 41ºC (106ºF), but the prevailing Atlantic winds generally bring a cooling breeze to the region. The Moroccan interior experiences greater temperature swings, with regional averages from 10º to 27ºC (50º to 81ºF) and daily highs of over 35ºC (95ºF) commonly occurring.

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throughout the summer. In the winter, the interior and southern and eastern regions can be quite cold, with temperatures decreasing to well below freezing.\textsuperscript{23, 24}

**Major Cities**

*Casablanca (Dar al-Baïda)*

Located on the upper Atlantic coast of western Morocco, Casablanca is the country’s most populous city as well as its economic, industrial, shipping, and service center.\textsuperscript{25, 26} The city is home to one of the world’s largest artificial ports, which directs most of the country’s foreign trade.\textsuperscript{27} The medina, or historic center of the metropolis, is inland from the harbor and surrounded by the modern city, which was initially constructed by the French during their occupation. Outside the modern commercial and residential areas lie expanses of shantytowns, or *bidonvilles* ("tin can cities"), where many poor residents stay in poorly constructed shelters.\textsuperscript{28}

The Portuguese built an incarnation of the city in the 16th century at the site of the medieval town of Anfa, which they had annihilated in 1468. Naming it Casa Branca, or "White House," the Portuguese abandoned the town after it was largely destroyed by an earthquake in 1755.\textsuperscript{29, 30} The Alaouite Dynasty (Arabs) subsequently rebuilt the city, and it soon experienced another influx of European traders and settlers. Spaniards who moved to the city named it Casablanca. Once the French held protectorate status over Morocco, they developed the city as a major port and commercial center, thereby initiating its rapid expansion in the 20th century.\textsuperscript{31, 32}
Today, Casablanca is a large-scale, modern metropolis with more than 3 million people.$^{33}$ Over 50% of the country’s industrial activity and financial transactions take place within the city.$^{34}$ Major local products include textiles, canned food, and electronics, and the coastal waters support a significant regional fishing industry. The tourist sector is not as strong as in other areas of the country. The massive Hassan II mosque, the city’s most prominent landmark, has impressed critics.$^{35}$

**Rabat**

North of Casablanca on the upper western coast, Rabat is the capital city. With a population of nearly 1.8 million people, it is the country’s second largest metropolis.$^{36}$ The imperial town was established on the mouth of the Bou Regreg River in the 12th century by the burgeoning Almohad Dynasty (Berber), which used it as a base for its military excursions into Spain. ("Rabat" derives from *ribat*, Arabic for a fortified monastery.) Subsequent rulers constructed the city’s fortified wall and began building an immense mosque, which was never completed. Today, the Tower of Hassan, the mosque’s immense unfinished minaret, is the city’s most renowned landmark. In the 17th century, Rabat grew rich as it provided refuge to hordes of infamous Barbary pirates.

Later, during French rule, Rabat served as the government’s administrative headquarters, and it maintained this role after Morocco regained its independence.$^{37}$ Rabat no longer functions as a significant port town because of the heavy silt deposits in the river, but it has developed significant textile and handicraft industries. Foreign embassies, international organizations, and government offices appear throughout the city.$^{38}$

**Fèz**

As the religious center of Morocco, the medieval city of Fèz is rich in culture, history, and spiritual character. The city, with a population just over 1 million, is in the northern inland region, on the Fèz River near its intersection with the Sebou River.$^{39, 40}$ It was

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founded in the late eighth century C.E. by Idris I (a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad) and further developed by his son, Idris II, who established it as an imperial capital. Fès soon became home to large numbers of Arab refugees from the Iberian Peninsula and Tunisia, who added character to an area already marked by Islamic and Berber influences. The Almoravids (Berber) consolidated the city in the 11th century, but Fès experienced a highpoint in the 14th century as the imperial capital and intellectual center of the Merinid Dynasty (Berber).41, 42

Within the city’s central historic medina are the famous Qarawiyin mosque, the oldest in North Africa, and its university. Founded in the ninth century, it is one of the world’s oldest continuous universities. Its presence ensured the city’s role as a major scholarly center of North Africa and the greater Muslim world, particularly during the medieval period.43, 44 Other city districts include New Fès, the area built by the Merinids; the Mellah, the former Jewish district; and the French-constructed nouvelle ville, the modern area of the city.45 Today, the city is known for traditional handicrafts, including the iconic Fès hat. Tourism and regional agriculture are also significant economic activities in the area.46

**Marrakech**

Marrakech is in central Morocco on the Haouz Plain north of the High Atlas Mountains. The city was founded in the 11th century by the Almoravids and was an imperial capital and military base intermittently in its history.47, 48 Today, Marrakech is home to about 909,000 people.49 Its medina is known as the “red city” or “rose city” (from the red clay used for much of the city’s construction) and it contains a large and bustling

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Marrakech is one of Morocco’s most popular tourist destinations. Because of its southern location and proximity to the Berber-populated Atlas Mountains, it has maintained a marked Berber influence. In addition to tourism, Marrakech operates as a commercial hub for the southern regions of the country and the nearby Sahara.

*Tangier*

Strategically located on the bay of the Strait of Gibraltar in northern Morocco, Tangier has long been contested over for trade and territory. Phoenician traders established a port there in the first millennium B.C.E., and in the following centuries the region came under the rule of the Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, and Visigoths. The Arabs occupied the city after their conquest of the region in the seventh century C.E., but the Almoravids later reclaimed the city for the Berbers by seizing it from Muslim Spain. Beginning in the 15th century, the Portuguese, Spanish, and English controlled Tangier for different periods. Although Morocco reclaimed the territory in the 17th century, numerous Western powers (including the United States) seized or negotiated administrative and commercial rights to the area during the period of the French protectorate and the two World Wars. After the country’s independence in 1956, Tangier returned to Moroccan control.

Today, Tangier continues to function as a shipping hub and has evolved into a significant tourist destination. Although Tangier had become reputed as a decaying port town marred by espionage and criminal activity, government initiatives in the last decade have increased economic and structural development. Approximately 768,000 people live in Tangier.

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History

Early History

Archeological evidence demonstrates the existence of agricultural settlements dating back several thousand years along Morocco’s coast. In the late second millennium B.C.E., the Imazighen people, or Berbers, first migrated into the region; their origin is not known. In the coming centuries, Morocco’s strategic location along the Mediterranean ensured the influx of outsiders. The Phoenicians (most noted for later founding the city of Carthage in modern Tunisia) established several trading centers on Moroccan shores in the first millennium B.C.E. As Carthage grew to a regional power, numerous large but unorganized Berber kingdoms developed.

In 146 B.C.E., Rome conquered Carthage, and in the ensuing century, Rome expanded its empire to include the productive areas of the Moroccan region, then known as the Mauretania Tingitana province. In gaining control over the area, Rome eschewed military force for the formation of coalitions with the Berber tribes. In the early centuries of the first millennium C.E., Christianity and Judaism spread in Morocco’s Roman-populated areas. Later, as Roman control over the area waned, Morocco’s coastal areas were invaded and ruled by successive powers, including the Vandals, the Byzantines, and the Visigoths. In the seventh century C.E., Arabs invaded and conquered the region, and over time they established Islam as the dominant religion.

Arab and Berber Dynasties

At this time, Morocco became a province of the expansive Umayyad Dynasty, a Muslim empire based in Damascus but spread throughout Northern Africa and Spain. (Shortly after the conquest, some Berbers joined the Arabs in their invasion of Spain in 711 C.E.) In the following centuries, sustained Berber revolt against Arab rule eventually resulted in a series of powerful Berber dynasties, including the Almoravids, whose empire in the 11th century C.E. encompassed much of the Maghreb

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region of northwestern Africa, as well as Muslim Spain. Subsequent Berber dynasties, whose domains varied in scope, included the Almohads (1130–1269 C.E.) and the Merinids (1248–1465 C.E.). In the 17th century, the Alaouites (Arabs who claimed to be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) seized power, and their reign has continued to this day, despite sporadic periods of weakened rule.

The Rise of European Powers in Morocco

After a period of relative isolation from Europe, Morocco drew the attention of European countries in the 19th century. France’s invasion of Algeria ultimately led to a few skirmishes between Morocco and France. Later territorial disputes with Spain further embroiled Morocco in military confrontation; eventually Spain won territorial and monetary concessions. In the early 20th century, European designs for Morocco resulted in France gaining protectorate status over most of the country, with Spain acquiring control of certain northern and southern areas, including the Spanish Sahara. Morocco officially retained its independence but was occupied and controlled by French and Spanish forces. Internal factions and an inferior military prevented Morocco from repelling the colonial powers, although Berber tribes in the Rif Mountains sustained an active armed resistance for several years.

Moroccan Independence and Spanish Sahara

Morocco’s independence movement arose from nationalist agitation in the 1920s and 1930s. Formed in 1934, the Moroccan Action Committee called for moderate reforms but was suppressed by the French occupation. During World War II, the Independence Party reasserted the nationalists’ demands for autonomy. Among the party’s supporters was Sultan Muhammad V, an Alaouite Dynasty member; he was exiled by the French in 1953. After 2 years of violent civil unrest, the French allowed Muhammad V to return, and he subsequently negotiated Morocco’s full

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independence. In 1956, France and Spain signed respective agreements formally recognizing Morocco’s status as a sovereign nation.78

In the 1970s, the status of the Spanish Sahara region became an international issue. Spain relinquished its control to Morocco and Mauritania. In 1976, a UN referendum backed by the International Court of Justice advocated regional autonomy for the indigenous Saharan population, as represented by the Polisario Front. Aided by Algeria, the Polisario Front formed the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) and soon engaged in sustained battles with Moroccan and Mauritanian forces. After military casualties compelled Mauritania to relinquish control of its area to the Polisario Front, Morocco seized the entire region and constructed a massive sand berm around 75% of the territory. Despite the establishment of a UN-administered cease-fire between the two factions in 1991, negotiations between Morocco (which continues to administer most of the region) and the Polisario Front have been limited and unproductive.79

Morocco and Western Sahara: 21st Century

The territorial dispute between Morocco and the Polisario Front manifested in a series of discussions held in 2007 and 2008. Morocco has proposed that Western Sahara become an autonomous region of the Moroccan state, whereas the Polisario Front has called for a referendum to be held, with the option for indigenous Sahrawis to vote for their independence. Talks in March 2008 demonstrated little progress and concluded without resolution. Each side has garnered some support from members of the international community.80 In March 2011, Morocco and the Polisario Front concluded another round of talks with each side rejecting the other’s positions.81 The United States continues to support the negotiation process and is an advocate of a mutually acceptable settlement.82, 83 Recent tensions between Sahrawis and Moroccans, concerns over resource extraction and human rights, as well as purported links to al-Qaeda, intensify this conflict for Morocco.84, 85

Government

Morocco is a constitutional monarchy headed by King Mohammed VI. Under the new constitution approved in July 2011, the king holds exclusive power in the areas of religion, security, and strategic policy choices. He also appoints the president of the government from the party that received the most votes. The president of the government presides over the cabinet or Council of Ministers (which is approved by the king) except in cases of national security (when the king presides). The bicameral parliament comprises two houses: the Chamber of Ministers and the Chamber of Representatives. The Chamber of Ministers consists of 270 members elected for 9-year terms. The directly elected Chamber of Representatives has 325 members (30 are reserved for women) who serve 5-year terms. The parliament can pass laws on most issues.86, 87, 88

The constitution also provides for a separate judiciary.89 The country has a dual judiciary system consisting of secular courts and religious courts. These secular courts are charged with handling non-family matters and criminal issues.90 The Sadad, or religious courts, are divided into shari’a courts (for Muslims) and Rabbinical courts (for Jewish) citizens.91 These courts are designed to handle family issues including marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance.92

Media

The government of Morocco owns or partially owns numerous media outlets, including Radio-Television Marocaine, 2M, al-Anbaa (a daily newspaper), and Le Matin du Sahara et du Maghreb (another daily paper). The remaining media outlets are privately owned. Satellite television and foreign papers can also be found throughout the country.93, 94

89 The independence of the judiciary remains doubtful because all judges are appointed by the king. See Paul Silverstein, “Weighing Morocco’s New Constitution,” Middle East Research and Information Project, 5 July 2011, http://www.merip.org/mero/mero070511
Despite official freedom of the press, media is still subject to the same press codes. Press who write against government positions about the monarchy, Islam, or Western Sahara are subject to prosecution for defamation or libel. Such journalists may be jailed or fined, as may their publishers.95, 96, 97

The constitution guarantees the right of freedom of expression. Neither the king nor anyone else has the right under the constitution to abrogate free speech, even in the case of national security. But the government has increased its amount of censorship since 2003. These restrictions may be based on the press code, which does allow regulation and censorship of the press. Some fear that the media freedoms are beginning to erode as the monarchy tightens restrictions.98

Economy

Morocco has been working to create economic growth by restructuring its economy to be more market-driven and unconstrained. Such a direction would likely reduce its poverty rates and unemployment. But the nation’s lack of economic diversification has hindered economic growth. Still, foreign aid and investment along with domestic restructuring have produced moderate success in recent years.99, 100

Moroccan relies heavily on the agricultural sector, particularly for jobs. Agriculture employs roughly 44% of the nation’s workforce and accounts for approximately 17% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).101 Morocco has abundant fish stocks and is the world’s leading exporter of sardines as well as a major source of canned seafood.102

The industrial sector accounts for nearly 32% of GDP and employs almost 20% of the labor force.103 Morocco has the world’s largest supply of phosphates and depends on their

export for revenue. The country also relies on its developing textile and clothing industry, electronics and automobile assembly plants, food processing, and handicrafts sector.\(^{104}\)

The service sector accounts for nearly 36% of employment but over half of GDP. The tourism sector has been a particularly important source of economic growth and development. It is the country’s largest source of foreign exchange. Government aid to promote the sector’s growth and improve infrastructure has been a major part of the country’s successful and ongoing efforts to attract and support increased numbers of tourists. Morocco’s coastal resorts, historic cities (such as Fès), and proximity to Europe account for its rising popularity as a tourist destination.\(^{106}\)

Prospects for the economy are generally positive but depend on the nation’s ability to improve its literacy rate. Additionally, the government recognizes that it must diversify exports and create more jobs, particularly for educated youth.\(^{107},^{108}\)

**Ethnic Groups and Languages**

*Berbers*

Berbers (also known as Imazighen) are indigenous tribes whose ancestors settled in the region in the late 2nd millennium B.C.E. Despite this grouping, the Imazighen population possessed unique languages and occupied distinct regions of North Africa and distinct regions of Morocco.\(^{109}\) Three Berber languages, collectively known as *Tamazight*, are common in Morocco. *Tashelhit* is spoken in the southwestern region, in the Anti-Atlas and western High Atlas mountains and the Sous Valley; *Central Atlas Tamazight* is prevalent in the Middle Atlas and High Atlas mountains; and *Tarafit* is spoken in the Rif Mountains of the north.\(^{110}\)

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After the Arab invasion in the seventh century C.E., most Imazighen converted to Islam, and in the following centuries, Arab and Imazighen peoples intermarried. Recent analyses of Berber-speaking and Arabic-speaking populations demonstrated few genetic differences between the two groups. But from 40 to 60% of the Moroccan population identifies or is described as Imazighen, based largely on linguistic and cultural differences.

The majority of Berbers are sedentary farmers raising cereal grains, fruits, vegetables, and occasionally cattle and sheep. Berber communities’ isolation, coupled with freezing temperatures and drought, has made them self-contained. Even the handicrafts, such as weavings and pottery, reflect the practical needs of the community. Berber communities comprise several clans living close to their ancestral lands. Family ties take precedence over all other relations, with the result that control is administered less by the government than by the community. Berber political systems are highly localized.

Arabs

Moroccan Arabs live in the cities and the rural areas. Rural Arabs are concentrated in the northern and western portions of the country along the coasts, where class divisions are pronounced. They commonly speak Moroccan Arabic, a colloquial version of standard Arabic.

Arabs dominate Moroccan society, controlling most of the nation’s wealth and constituting much of the upper class, though not all Arabs are members of the upper class. The Alaouites, self-proclaimed descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, are the wealthiest and most powerful Arab group.

**Sahrawi**

In 1976, Morocco annexed two-thirds of the Western Sahara, and in 1979 claimed the remaining third. But the Sahrawi mounted a resistance movement and guerrilla war that ended in 1991. To date, sovereignty has not been resolved, and demands for a referendum on independence are ongoing and supported by Algeria.¹²⁰

These nomadic peoples in the Western Sahara trace their origins to the Berbers. Intermarriage among the migrating Arabs and the Berbers created a new culture referred to by Europeans as the Moorish culture. Today it is referred to as the Sahrawi, or “people of the Sahara.” Once nomadic, this group has become more sedentary because of the dangers posed by ongoing conflict across the territory.¹²¹

A caste system remains largely intact among the Sahrawi. The highest caste members are the descendants of scholars of Islam or soldiers. The second caste comprises mainly craftsmen and artisans. The lowest class was traditionally the black slaves; although slavery has been outlawed, darker-skinned Sahrawi face discrimination. Despite their well-defined caste system, the Sahrawi are the most gender equal of all groups in the country. Resisting attempts by Arabs to acculturate them, the Sahrawi have successfully preserved many elements of their culture.¹²²

**Jews**

There has been a Jewish presence in Morocco for around 2,000 years. Today, most of the 5,500 remaining Jews live in the cities of Rabat, Casablanca, and Tangier.¹²³ Although they have not generally intermarried with the other groups, Moroccan Jews have adopted some cultural practices. Recent attacks against Jewish restaurants, cemeteries, and other establishments have caused concern among the Moroccan Jewish population.¹²⁴

Chapter 1 Assessment

1. The fertile plains of Morocco are in less-populated areas.
   False
   Morocco’s Atlantic coast, where the majority of the country’s population resides, largely consists of fertile plains and plateaus.

2. Agricultural exports are the largest source of foreign exchange.
   False
   Tourism is the country’s largest source of foreign exchange.

3. Morocco has no claims to Western Sahara.
   False
   There is a territorial dispute between Morocco and the Polisario Front over Western Sahara.

4. Islam was introduced in the seventh century by invading Arabs.
   True
   In the seventh century C.E., Arabs invaded and conquered the region, and over time established Islam as the dominant religion.

5. The Berber and Arab populations inhabit the same areas of Morocco.
   False
   The Arab population inhabits the Atlantic coast, while the Berbers tend to live in the mountainous regions and eastern plateaus.
CHAPTER 2: RELIGION

Overview of Major Religions

Morocco’s population is 99% Muslim; the remaining 1% largely comprises small numbers of Jewish and Christian people. The vast majority of the country’s Muslim population practices the Sunni form of Islam, which is the largest sect of the Islamic faith. For adherents, Islam guides every aspect of life. Its significance in the social values and legal code of Moroccan society cannot be overestimated.

Islam: Tenets and Spread

Islam’s followers believe that the faith has existed eternally, but has been revealed over time by a series of prophets—including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus—culminating with the Prophet Muhammad (570–632 C.E.). For Muslims, Muhammad’s message is the final and definitive revelation of the faith. The literal meanings of the Arabic term “islam” are “to submit” or “to surrender.” A Muslim, therefore, is one who submits to the will of Allah, or God, the sole creator of the universe. Allah’s message is recited in the Quran, the sacred scriptures of Islam, which were revealed to Muhammad and subsequently recorded and compiled in written form. The essence of this message is found in the shahada, the Islamic creed and the first of the faith’s “Five Pillars,” or fundamental duties: “There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.” Islam’s remaining obligatory deeds include the performance of daily ritual prayers, the payment of a tax to support the Muslim community (particularly the poor and needy), fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, and undertaking a pilgrimage to the Islamic holy city of Mecca.

Moroccan Islam

There are two significant aspects of Islam that are particular to Morocco and that developed, in part, from the cultural intermixing of Arab and Berber peoples. The direct relationship between man and Allah is so ingrained in Moroccan culture that it is now an

accepted part of the faith, despite the Quran’s denial of this relationship. Man’s relationship to Allah is mediated by two related powers: the marabout and baraka. The marabout is a Muslim holy man. Prominent and highly revered religious figures, marabouts are thought to possess considerable spiritual grace and power known as baraka. For Moroccan Muslims, baraka is a transferable force that originates with Allah and can be passed on to others, most notably to the marabout’s firstborn son. Marabouts are more common in Morocco’s rural areas, where they often maintain leadership roles in the local community.

Sufism, a form of mystical Islam, also has a strong historical tradition within Morocco. The basic objective of Sufi practitioners is to obtain a direct and personal experience of the divine through different mystical and ascetic paths. Historically, many Sufi mystics have become marabouts because they possessed considerable baraka.

**Christianity and Judaism**

Islam, Christianity, and Judaism are considered “Abrahamic” religions because each has roots in Abraham’s covenant with God (as outlined in the Hebrew Scriptures). Judaism is the oldest of the three faiths, which share the belief in a single and all-powerful God. They share other beliefs, including an afterlife, a final judgment, and the existence of angels and demons.

Christianity arose from Judaism, and the two faiths share the foundation of the Hebrew Scriptures, known to Christians as the Old Testament. But Christians developed a unique set of practices and beliefs (based on the teachings of Jesus and his 12 disciples) that are represented in the New Testament. The two belief systems differ in numerous ways, but two stand out. First, Christians believe in the divinity of Jesus, whereas Jews do not believe that Jesus was either the son of God or a prophet (although Muslims consider Jesus to be the second-to-last prophet before Muhammad). Second, Judaism is described as a covenant, or agreement, between God and the Jewish people. Christians believe that

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this agreement was replaced with “a new covenant,” brought about through the coming of Jesus.137

During the initial growth of Islam and its subsequent spread via the expansion of the Arab empire, Christian and Jewish communities held the status of *Ahl al-Kitab*, or “People of the Book.”138 This designation stemmed from their beliefs in the sacred scriptures, which were also recognized by Muslims to an extent. As a result, Jews and Christians generally could maintain their religious freedom within the larger Islamic community, although at times they were required to pay a special tax to do so. In any case, practitioners of Islam accepted that Jews and Christians were also monotheists with some mutual history.139

**Role of Religion in Government**

Islam is Morocco’s official state religion and the king presides over the religion and the state.140 Part of the monarchy’s legitimacy may stem from the claim of the king to be a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.141 The constitution guarantees religious freedom for all faiths.142 The government monitors religious activities within the kingdom, including overseeing Muslim mosques and Islamic groups to prevent them from becoming a political rather than a religious force. It is illegal to proselytize and to attempt to convert Muslims to a different faith. Materials that are non-Islamic or do not conform to the monarchy’s form of Islam cannot be distributed. In 2009–2010, the government expelled 150 Christians for proselytizing, raided two Christian meetings, and prevented Muslims from protesting regulations against eating during Ramadan.143

Islamic law, as defined in the Quran, plays a significant role in Morocco’s legal code, particularly in personal and familial issues such as marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance. For Muslim citizens, legal matters such as these are ruled on by Muslim religious judges, or *qadis*, in special courts founded in Islamic law, known as shari’a. Similarly, cases concerning the personal status of Morocco’s Jewish citizens are

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administered in a court system overseen by Rabbinical judges. All other legal matters fall under the authority of the secular civil courts, in which the legal code is based on French and Spanish civil law.

The Moroccan government provides funding and tax benefits to Muslim, Christian, and Jewish organizations. It also offers financial support to sustain the teaching of Islam and Judaism in public schools.

**Influence of Religion on Daily Life**

The obligatory duties of the Islamic faith shape the daily lives of Moroccan Muslims. Muslims are obliged to perform a series of daily prayers, known as salat, the “Second Pillar” of Islam. These prayers are performed at five established times of the day: before dawn, just after noon, late afternoon, just after sunset, and before retiring in the evening. (In Morocco, prayer times are typically posted in the local newspaper.) Friday is the Islamic holy day and the primary day of worship.

Islam’s impact on Moroccan culture is apparent, for example, in fatalism, which is a sense that all is preordained and that it is impossible to escape one’s fate. Fatalism manifests in the Moroccan acceptance of fate and ability to adapt to change. The Moroccan view of the future is conditional, a recognition that what will happen must be God’s will.

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Muslims believe that Islam is transmitted to the children from the father. This is why Muslim women may not marry a non-Muslim, while Muslim men may (though this is relatively rare).\(^{154}\)

Religion influences daily life in other ways. Muslims do not eat pork, nor do they drink or gamble. Dress codes reflect Islamic values, although it is rare except in rural areas to find women wearing veils.\(^{155}\)

**Religious Conventions and Gender Roles**

Islam profoundly affects gender roles. Males and females are segregated outside the home. Women remain in private spaces such as the home, while men are able to spend time outside the home.\(^{156, 157, 158}\) Islamic law and tradition provide men with more rights and higher social status than women.\(^{159, 160}\) But recent reforms in Moroccan law have made substantial gains in addressing gender inequality. In 2004, the Moroccan government, led by King Mohammad VI, instituted a new Moroccan family code, or *Moudawana*. The new code offers numerous legal protections for women, including the minimum age for marriage (raised from 15 to 18), greater personal freedom within marriage, the legal right to initiate divorce, and greater restrictions on the practice of polygamy. Such reforms have made Morocco a leader in women’s rights in the Muslim world.\(^{161, 162, 163}\)

Gender roles are more rigid among the Arab population than the Muslim Berbers. Men are primarily responsible for the economic well-being of the family and are regarded as the major authority figures. These roles are even more pronounced among the more

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\(^{159}\) Law School, Emory University, “Morocco, Kingdom of (& Western Sahara),” n.d., http://www.law.emory.edu/ifl/legal/morocco.htm


fundamentalist Arabs. Upper-class Moroccans, especially urban dwellers, seem more willing to accommodate the increased role of women.\textsuperscript{164}

The workforce follows a fairly traditional division of labor. In rural areas, men tend to the livestock and work the fields while women generally care for the children and the home. Urban men generally work outside the home and women commonly stay home and care for the household.\textsuperscript{165} Since the implementation of the New Family Code in 2004, women are participating in politics and other domains. They also hold seats in parliament.\textsuperscript{166}

**Religious Events**

**Ramadan**

The observance of Ramadan, a month-long event commemorating the initial revelation of the Quran, is an essential component of the Islamic faith. During Ramadan, Muslims fulfill one of the pillars of Islam, the undertaking of a fast known as sawm.\textsuperscript{167} Throughout the month, Muslims abstain during daylight hours from eating, smoking, drinking, or having sex.\textsuperscript{168} Within the Muslim community, young children, elders, soldiers on duty, the infirm, and manual laborers are not expected to participate in the fast.\textsuperscript{169} Non-Muslims, including visitors and tourists, are also not required to fast, but it is against the law for them to eat, drink, smoke, or chew gum while in public.\textsuperscript{170, 171, 172}

At sunset each evening, the fast ends with family and friends celebrating with a meal (*iftar*), and this celebration usually extends until late in the evening. The pace of everyday life slows considerably during the holy month. Muslims generally work shorter hours and often suffer the effects of fasting (such as fatigue). Accordingly, businesses and shops maintain limited, irregular hours.\textsuperscript{173, 174}


\textsuperscript{167} Etain O’Carroll et al., *Morocco* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007), 455.


Moussem

More common in rural areas than in urban centers, moussem are local ceremonies or festivals held in honor of deceased marabouts. Moroccans (and even tourists) make pilgrimages to the tombs of these holy men, and the crowds celebrate with many festivities, including dancing, music, and feasts. The size of each ceremony depends upon the renown of the marabout; festivals held for famous marabouts may draw considerable numbers. 175

Religious Holidays

Officially, two Islamic celebrations are specifically cited in the Quran: Eid al-Fitr, a festival held on the last night of Ramadan, and Eid al-Adha, a feast marking the end of the pilgrimage, or hajj, to Mecca. These celebrations are recognized by all Muslims. For orthodox Muslims, additional celebrations are considered extraneous and imperfect because they do not match the revelations of Muhammad.176 Nonetheless, several Muslim holidays are observed in Morocco. Because the Islamic calendar is based on the lunar cycle, the dates of these holidays change each year.177

Eid al-Fitr (Eid al-Sagheer)

The end of Ramadan is celebrated with a feast and extended festival called Eid al-Fitr, which lasts 3 days and signifies the return to normal habits. At this time, Muslims wear new clothes, visit mosques, and share traditional meals and gifts with family and friends.178, 179

Eid al-Adha (Eid al-Kabeer)

The Islamic festival Eid al-Adha occurs in the 12th month of the Islamic lunar year, when it is suggested that Muslims observe the “Fifth Pillar” of Islam by undertaking a holy pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca. Marking the end of the pilgrimage, Eid al-Adha, or the Feast of the Sacrifice, commemorates Abraham’s offer to sacrifice his son in obedience to Allah. During this time, Muslims sacrifice animals, primarily lambs and sheep, whose meat they eat and share with their families and the poor.180, 181, 182

175 Francesca Davis Di Piazza, Morocco in Pictures (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2007), 48–49.
Al-Hijra or Muharram

Al-Hijra is the Islamic New Year and falls on the first day of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar. This holiday lacks the deep religious significance of the Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha festivals, but serves as a day for Muslims to quietly commemorate Muhammad’s migration from Mecca to Medina.\(^\text{183, 184}\)

Mawlid al-Nabi

Celebrated in the third month of the Islamic calendar, this festival commemorates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.\(^\text{185, 186}\) This is a 2-day celebration in Morocco.\(^\text{187}\)

Ashora

This Shi’a holiday, though not a work holiday, observes the assassination of Husayn ibn Ali, Muhammad’s grandson and the son of Ali. His death was an important factor in the division into Sunni and Shi’a factions. In essence, it is a day of mourning; however, children receive presents on this day.\(^\text{188, 189, 190}\)

Buildings of Worship

Mosques

Mosques are greatly important to Muslims in Morocco and serve as a gathering place not only for worship but also as centers for education, knowledge, and even dispute resolution.\(^\text{191}\) Among the most notable is the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca. It is one of the largest mosques in the world.\(^\text{192, 193}\) The historic Karaouine Mosque in Fès

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\(^{185}\) Etain O’Carroll et al., *Morocco* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications), 455.


\(^{188}\) Etain O’Carroll et al., *Morocco* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications), 455.


accommodates 20,000 worshippers and was built in 859 C.E. In Marrakesh is the Koutoubia Mosque, one of the most prominent landmarks in the city.\textsuperscript{194}

Mosques consist of an open interior, enclosed by a roof, with a \textit{mihrab} and \textit{minbar} inside the central prayer area; often, a minaret is attached to the exterior. A \textit{mihrab} is a niche in the wall of the mosque that faces the direction of Mecca, known as \textit{qibla} (Islamic prayer is always directed toward the holy city). This is where the \textit{imam}, or prayer leader, stands during services. According to tradition, the space in front of the \textit{mihrab} must have a roof, and the \textit{qibla} wall can have no doors.\textsuperscript{195} The \textit{minbar} is an elevated seat to the right of the \textit{mihrab} that acts as a pulpit for the Islamic priest, or \textit{khatib}. The floor of the prayer area is covered with mats or carpets, where Muslims gather to pray. Minarets are towers from which the \textit{muezzin}, or “crier,” calls other Muslims to the five daily sessions of prayer. The number of minarets varies from one to six.\textsuperscript{196} Mosques often contain designated areas for Muslims to perform their ritual ablution before prayer.\textsuperscript{197}

\textbf{Murabitin}

\textit{Murabitin} are small, dome-shaped temples built to enshrine the bodies of deceased \textit{marabouts}, whose remains are believed to retain and emit \textit{baraka}. These structures are surrounded by a small courtyard and are found in rural Morocco. Many Moroccans undertake pilgrimages to these holy sites in order to earn religious blessings and participate in local festivals.\textsuperscript{198, 199}

\textbf{Behavior in Places of Worship}

In Morocco, non-Muslims are generally not allowed to enter mosques.\textsuperscript{200} One exception is the Hassan II mosque in Casablanca, which offers guided tours to non-Muslims at established hours.\textsuperscript{201, 202}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{202} Etain O’Carroll et al., \textit{Morocco} (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications), 91.
\end{thebibliography}
Exchange 1: May I enter the mosque?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>May I enter the mosque?</th>
<th>wash yemken leeya nidKhul lijame’?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When going out in public, one should dress conservatively, particularly when visiting a mosque. Men should wear pants and long-sleeved shirts. Women should also wear long-sleeved shirts with pants or long skirts. In both cases, arms and legs should be covered, and clothing should not be tight or revealing. Finally, and of utmost importance, shoes must be removed before entering a mosque.203

Exchange 2: Must I take off my shoes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?</th>
<th>wash KhaSni nHayed SubaaTi fejaame’?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Islamic tradition requires women to cover their heads (preferably with a scarf) before entering a mosque; men are not required to do so.204, 205

Exchange 3: Do I need to cover my head?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do I need to cover my head?</th>
<th>wash KhaSni nghaTi RaaSi?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>laa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is not acceptable to enter the mosque when others are conducting prayers. Once inside, the basic rules of etiquette for attending most religious or sacred institutions apply: speak softly and respectfully and do not disturb those at prayer.206 Women are not allowed in the mosque during their menstrual period; their presence during this time is considered impure.207, 208

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203 Lucy Debenham, “Etiquette in Morocco,” Travel Etiquette (website), 4 December 2010, [http://www.traveletiquette.co.uk/etiquettemorocco.html](http://www.traveletiquette.co.uk/etiquettemorocco.html)


205 Lucy Debenham, “Etiquette in Morocco,” Travel Etiquette (website), 4 December 2010, [http://www.traveletiquette.co.uk/etiquettemorocco.html](http://www.traveletiquette.co.uk/etiquettemorocco.html)


Chapter 2 Religion

1. Morocco’s population is evenly divided between Islam and Christianity.
   False
   Morocco’s population is 99% Muslim; the remaining 1% largely consists of small numbers of Jewish and Christian people.

2. Non-Muslim people in Morocco may not eat or drink in public during Ramadan.
   True
   Non-Muslims are not required to fast, but it is forbidden for them to eat, drink, smoke, or chew gum while in public.

3. Moudawana is the name for the civil courts.
   False
   The new Moroccan family code, or Moudawana, offers numerous legal protections for women.

4. Non-Muslims can enter any mosque.
   False
   In Morocco, non-Muslims are generally not allowed to enter mosques. One exception is the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca.

5. A marabout is a holy grave site.
   False
   The marabout is a Muslim holy man and is considered a prominent and highly revered religious figure. Deceased marabouts are enshrined in murabitin: small, dome-shaped temples that are holy sites.
CHAPTER 3: TRADITIONS

Honor and Shame

The preservation of an individual’s honor and dignity, as well as that of one’s family, is one of the most important traditional values in Morocco. Moroccans take great care to maintain a positive social standing and reputation, since much of their self-worth depends upon the perceptions of others. Shame, or *hishma*, occurs when a person’s inappropriate behavior is recognized by the community. Such behavior may include disobedience to Islamic law, deviation from social norms, or some failure or act of delinquency. A person who is shamed may be ostracized by the community and family; for Moroccans, this is devastating. The person’s family may suffer shame through association.209

To minimize the risk of shaming a Moroccan, visitors should avoid criticizing or embarrassing others in public.210 In public settings, Moroccans often check or alter their behavior and statements to create esteem or save face. Yet their actions or feelings in private may be quite different. For this reason, it may be advisable to confirm in private any comments or commitments made in public.211

Codes of Politeness

Greetings

When meeting people of the same gender as you in public, it is customary to greet each person individually by shaking hands and then touching one’s heart (with the right hand) to demonstrate warmth and sincerity.212

Exchange 4: Good afternoon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier</th>
<th>Good afternoon.</th>
<th>msa lKheyR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Good afternoon.</td>
<td>msa lKheyR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moroccan handshakes are lighter than the traditional firm handshake of Americans, but they may last longer. Handshaking is not done between persons of the opposite gender, especially if they are unacquainted. If a Moroccan woman extends her hand first, it is polite to follow her lead. But a small bow is more common for the unacquainted.213

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213 Lucy Debenham, “Etiquette in Morocco,” Travel Etiquette, 4 December 2010, [http://www.traveletiquette.co.uk/EtiquetteMorocco.html](http://www.traveletiquette.co.uk/EtiquetteMorocco.html)
Exchange 5: How are you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier</th>
<th>How are you?</th>
<th>keedaayeR?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Fine, very well.</td>
<td>beKheyR lHamdulaah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Veiled women in particular are likely to avoid physical contact. In any case, it is important to maintain a certain distance from persons of the opposite gender in public; affectionate displays are considered inappropriate.

Members of the same gender who know one another greet with hugs and a series of kisses on each cheek (left cheek first). Well-acquainted members of the opposite gender may shake hands and exchange kisses, but hugs between male and female are reserved for family members.

Exchange 6: Good evening!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier</th>
<th>Good evening!</th>
<th>msa lKheyR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Good evening!</td>
<td>msa lKheyR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moroccans commonly use titles in formal situations and in addressing acquaintances. Friends use first names. Respect may dictate that elders are addressed by a title. Sometimes family titles such as “sister” or “uncle” are used when greeting strangers.

Moroccan greetings can be long. It is polite to make inquiries about friends, work, family, and other common topics. But men should never ask about another man’s wife or other female relatives.

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215 Lucy Debenham, “Etiquette in Morocco,” Travel Etiquette, 4 December 2010, [http://www.traveletiquette.co.uk/EtiquetteMorocco.html](http://www.traveletiquette.co.uk/EtiquetteMorocco.html)
Hospitality and Gift-Giving

Moroccans are known as kind and generous hosts, and it is common for them to hold social engagements in their home. Such occasions happen around a large meal, with the hosts taking pride in satisfying the guests’ needs. When invited to a Moroccan home, it is necessary to confirm whether your spouse is included. When conservative Moroccans entertain both genders together, which is not frequent, men and women may be in separate rooms. At times, exceptions are made for foreign women, but it is best to ask. Also, it is important to dress appropriately for the occasion. As a guest, wearing the proper, conservative attire demonstrates respect for the host and the household. Upon entering the host’s home, it is customary to remove your shoes. (It is considered extremely rude to show the soles of your shoes or the bottoms of your feet, especially when sitting.)

Exchange 7: Hello!

| Soldier: | Hi, Mr. Muhammad. | see muHamed, esalaamu 'aleykum |
| Local: | Hello! | wa'aleykum salaam |
| Soldier: | Are you doing well? | labaas 'leek? |
| Local: | Yes. | lHamdul-laah |

Although not mandatory in urban areas, it is generally acceptable for a guest to bring a small gift, such as fruit, pastries, nuts, or flowers. Gifts are usually anticipated in rural areas, particularly among family members. Always present gifts with the right hand.

Exchange 8: This gift is for you.

| Soldier: | This gift is for you. | bgheyt ne'Teek haad lkaaDu |
| Local: | I cannot accept this. | bizaaf 'leeya haad lkaaDu, maaymkinsh naaKhdu min 'andek |

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222 Lucy Debenham, “Etiquette in Morocco,” Travel Etiquette, 4 December 2010, [http://www.traveletiquette.co.uk/EtiquetteMorocco.html](http://www.traveletiquette.co.uk/EtiquetteMorocco.html)
In most cases, alcohol is not an appropriate gift because Muslims are prohibited from consuming it.\footnote{Footprint Travel Guides, “Morocco: Religion,” 2011, \url{http://www.footprinttravelguides.com/c/6020/religion/}} It is suitable to offer small, token gifts to the children of the household. Moroccans generally do not expect to receive presents from their guests and typically wait to open the gift until the giver is no longer present.\footnote{Zikit, “Moroccan Business Etiquette: General Guidelines,” n.d., \url{http://www.zikit.org/default.asp?PageID=257}}

**Gender Roles and Interactions**

Islamic tradition provides the foundation for gender roles and interaction. Men possess higher social status and more rights than women.\footnote{Lucy Debenham, “Etiquette in Morocco,” Travel Etiquette, 4 December 2010, \url{http://www.traveletiquette.co.uk/EtiquetteMorocco.html}} Males are afforded more opportunities and have fewer restrictions than women.\footnote{Justin McGuinness, *Morocco* (Bath, England: Footprint Handbooks, 2002), 560–62.}

Recent reforms and modernization have provided women with greater freedom (particularly in urban areas), but segregation remains prevalent in conservative regions and households. \(^{244, 245}\)

Segregation restricts education: fewer girls receive advanced education than boys. (Nationwide, the literacy rate for women is 44%, compared to 69% for men; in rural areas, only 10% of women are literate.)\(^{246, 247}\)

Gender segregation allows for stricter control over male-female interactions and protects a woman’s virginity. Virginity safeguards a woman’s value as a potential wife.\(^{248, 249, 250}\) There have been “honor killings” in Morocco in which male family members murdered female relatives who lost their virginity or committed other behaviors that were considered inappropriate.\(^{251}\) Honor killings are subject to legal penalties, but Article 418 of the Moroccan penal code grants some extenuating circumstances to a man who injures or murders his wife.\(^{252, 253}\) The woman’s death is intended to restore a sense of “honor” to the family. Premarital sex for males is fairly common.\(^{254, 255}\)

Foreign females are not expected to segregate themselves, but may be harassed when in public alone. Such harassment is best ignored.\(^{256}\)

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Dining Etiquette

At home, meals are served at round, knee-high tables, with guests seated next to the host.257, 258 Before the food is served, guests wash their hands over a basin that is passed around the table. A towel is provided to dry one’s hands. (This is repeated after the meal.)259, 260 Napkins are not used for wiping hands during the meal but to keep the lap clean.261, 262 Before eating, wait for a blessing to be given or for the host to begin eating.263 Meals are served in a large communal bowl, generally without utensils. Use a piece of bread or the thumb and two fingers to scoop up food from the bowl. It is imperative to use only the right hand when gathering food and eating, even if one is left-handed.264 It is considered rude to take food from the other side of the serving bowl. Eat only the food that is directly in front of you.265, 266, 267 Guests receive the choicest portions of the meal from the host, who moves these portions to the appropriate spot in the bowl. It is polite to state one’s satisfaction with the meal.268

Exchange 9: The food tastes so good.

| Soldier: | The food tastes so good. | tbaaRak laah 'leykum, lmaakla mu'tabaRa |
| Local:   | Thank you.              | bi-SeHa                                    |

Because Moroccan meals feature many courses, they are often long. Hosts frequently offer more food, which everyone is encouraged (though not required) to eat. It is important to pace one’s eating. An abundance of food is considered a display of hospitality.  

Exchange 10: What is the name of this dish?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>What is the name of this dish?</th>
<th>shnu smeeyet haadi lmaakla?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>This is couscous.</td>
<td>haadal-lkesksso</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is common for water to be served in a communal glass. Upon request, the host may provide soft drinks with individual glasses. At the end of the meal, reiterate one’s pleasure and satisfaction with the food, and thank the host for the hospitality.

Exchange 11: I really appreciate your hospitality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>I really appreciate your hospitality.</th>
<th>tbaRk laah 'leykum, tihaleetu feeya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>It is nothing.</td>
<td>beSeHa wRaaha maadeRna waalu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cuisine and Eating Patterns

Famous for its many flavors, Morocco’s cuisine displays Arab, Berber, Spanish, French, and Jewish influences. Fresh breads, lamb and chicken, vegetables, and grain dishes are staples. Fruits (notably dates and figs) and nuts are important ingredients. Many dishes contain saffron, cumin, ginger, paprika, cinnamon, parsley, cilantro, and mint. Pork and alcohol are not generally served.

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Moroccans eat three meals a day. Breakfast typically consists of bread with olive oil or butter and a cup of coffee or mint tea.\textsuperscript{280, 281} Other breakfasts include \textit{beyssara} (a stew made of fava beans with cumin and paprika), \textit{beghrir} (pancakes), or lambs’ heads and calves’ feet.\textsuperscript{282}

Families usually eat lunch, the largest and most important meal of the day, together. Moroccans allow 2–4 hours for lunch, followed by a siesta.\textsuperscript{283} During this time, businesses and schools close, and relatives and friends convene for the meal.\textsuperscript{284} Typical fare includes a salad and a \textit{tajine} dish, such as lamb with prunes.\textsuperscript{285} Couscous, made from coarse semolina wheat flour, is often served with a meat or vegetable topping.\textsuperscript{286} This national dish carries strong emotional and religious overtones. Moroccans believe that those who eat it will receive God’s blessing.\textsuperscript{287}

Supper is light. It may include \textit{harira}, a thick soup generally made with tomatoes, onions, saffron, cilantro, and meat (often lamb). Leftovers from lunch are also common.\textsuperscript{288, 289} Fruits and cakes are usual desserts.\textsuperscript{290} Water, soft drinks, coffee, and mint tea are the most common drinks.\textsuperscript{291, 292}

When dining at a restaurant, the person making the invitation normally pays for the meal. Tipping is not expected.\textsuperscript{293}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{279} Food by Country, “Morocco,” n.d., \url{http://www.foodbycountry.com/Kazakhstan-to-South-Africa/Morocco.html}
\item \textsuperscript{281} Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby, eds., \textit{Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life: vol. 1—Africa}, 2nd ed. (Detroit, MI: Gale Cengage Learning, 2009), 392.
\item \textsuperscript{282} Food by Country, “Morocco,” n.d., \url{http://www.foodbycountry.com/Kazakhstan-to-South-Africa/Morocco.html}
\item \textsuperscript{286} Francesca Davis Di Piazza, \textit{Morocco in Pictures} (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2007), 56.
\item \textsuperscript{289} Food by Country, “Morocco,” n.d., \url{http://www.foodbycountry.com/Kazakhstan-to-South-Africa/Morocco.html}
\item \textsuperscript{290} Kevin Delgado, \textit{Modern Nations of the World: Morocco} (New York: Lucent Books, 2006), 76.
\end{itemize}
**Bastilla** is a famous Moroccan specialty consisting of multiple layers of thin pastry filled with pigeon or chicken and cooked with caramelized onions, eggs, and almonds. Topped with cinnamon and sugar, the dish is often served on special occasions.294

**Exchange 12: This food is very good.**

| Soldier: | This food is very good. | haadi-lmaakla zweyna |
| Local:   | It’s pastilla            | haadi ibesTeyla      |

**Exchange 13: What ingredients are used?**

| Soldier: | What ingredients are used to make Pastilla? | shnaheeya lmakadeeR dyaal lbisTeyla? |
| Local:   | Eggs, almonds, chicken, cinnamon, sugar.    | lbeyD, loz, ljaaj, lkaRfa, sukaR      |

**Dress Codes**

Although Moroccan culture increasingly demonstrates modern, Western elements, particularly among young urbanites, most of the country retains traditional and conservative manners of dress, which are strongly tied to Islamic custom.295, 296 Western-style suits and women’s wear are common in the city and may be worn under the traditional *djellaba*.297 Worn by both genders, this traditional form of Moroccan clothing is a long, loose-fitting robe with a pointed hood and a buttoned or zippered front.298 *Djellabas* extend to the ankles and have long sleeves. These garments range in fabric, quality, and decoration; tailored *djellabas* with elaborate needlework are more expensive and indicate greater wealth. Wearing the *djellaba* commonly indicates that the person is more conservative with traditional values.299 Kaftans, hoodless robes that are similar to but often more elegant than *djellabas*, are also common, particularly at weddings and other social events.300

300 The Travel Source, “Morocco: Dress,” 2011, [http://www.thetravelsource.net/TravellInfoPages/culture.html](http://www.thetravelsource.net/TravellInfoPages/culture.html)
In Morocco, personal appearance in public is an indication of a person’s status and values, as well as those of the family. Visitors to Morocco should be attentive to their appearance at all times because it reflects not only upon them, but upon their family and culture.301

**Exchange 14: How should I dress?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>How should I dress?</th>
<th>shnu KhaSni lbes?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Wear loose fitting clothes which cover your body.</td>
<td>lbes shee Hwaayej lee yghaTeewuk kulek wmaa ykunoosh mzayReen 'leyk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Headgear**

Headgear is common throughout Morocco and indicates something about the person wearing it. For men, turbans are popular in rural areas, particularly with Berbers. Berbers can often be distinguished from Arabs by their white turbans. Arab turbans are frequently gold or orange.302 Knit stocking caps are worn predominantly by the poor, never by middle-class or upper-class men. Crocheted skullcaps are a step above and the fez is higher still. Crocheted skullcaps may be adorned with a sign indicating a religious brotherhood and are frequently worn to the mosque. The fez, connoting wealth and respectability, is largely worn by older men and may be fading in use, except as ceremonial headgear.303

In accord with Islamic tradition, most Moroccan women keep their heads covered in public, usually with a hijab, or headscarf, or the hood of their *djellaba*.304 Wearing a headscarf is not a law in Morocco, but it often signifies that a woman may have more traditional Islamic views.305, 306 In rural areas, Berber women may often be seen without scarves or veils.307

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General Rules of Dress

It is highly recommended that visitors respect the country’s cultural norms when selecting their attire. In most areas of the country, a person’s legs and shoulders are considered private, so men and women should make every effort to cover them at all times. Men should cover everything from their elbows to below their knees, and women should cover everything from their wrists to their ankles. Accordingly, men should wear long-sleeve shirts and pants; women should wear long-sleeve shirts and pants, or long, loose-fitting dresses with long sleeves. Revealing clothing, such as shorts and swimsuits, should be worn only at the beach or a swimming pool. Both genders should avoid wearing vests, T-shirts, sandals, and any form of tight-fitting clothing in public.

Exchange 15: Is this acceptable to wear?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Is this acceptable to wear?</th>
<th>Wash haadi lHwaayej munaasiba?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Yes.</td>
<td>Aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Events

National Holidays

Moroccans observe public holidays according to the Western calendar; therefore, the annual dates of these celebrations remain the same. Morocco celebrates New Year’s Day (1 January) as well as a May Day (1 May).

Exchange 16: Will you be celebrating New Year’s Eve?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Will you be celebrating New Year’s Eve?</th>
<th>Wash ghaadi teHtaafel bRaasel’aam?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Yes!</td>
<td>Aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many holidays commemorate significant events in the country’s history. Held on 30 July, Feast of the Throne, or Throne Day, celebrates the accession of King Muhammed VI to the Moroccan throne in 1999. A patriotic holiday, the Anniversary of the Green

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March, held on 6 November, commemorates the advance of Moroccans into the Western Sahara region after Spain relinquished control over the territory in 1975.\textsuperscript{317, 318} Morocco’s Independence Day (18 November) celebrates the nation’s return to sovereignty in 1956, after years of French colonial control. Independence Manifesto (11 January) commemorates the country’s previous declaration of independence from France in 1944.\textsuperscript{319, 320} Other public holidays include the Allegiance of Oued Eddahab (14 August), the Anniversary of the King’s and People’s Revolution (20 August), and Young People’s Day (21 August), which recognizes the king’s birthday.\textsuperscript{321, 322} For all public holidays, the nation’s banks, post offices, and many of its shops close in observance. These celebrations vary in importance to the Moroccan people, but are less significant than Islamic holidays and events.\textsuperscript{323}

\textit{Festivals and Celebrations}

Many of Morocco’s major celebrations are \textit{moussem}s, festivals held in honor of deceased \textit{marabouts}. Some of the largest of these include the Moussem of Ben Aïssa, held in April in Meknès, and the Moussem of Sidi Bousselham, held in July in Moulay Bousselham. Medieval pageantry, circus-like performances, and dancing are some of the activities seen at these large-scale events.\textsuperscript{324, 325, 326, 327} Other festivals of a more secular nature include the Festival of World Sacred Music, held in Fès in June; the Rose Festival, held each May in El Kelaâ M’Gouna; and the Date Festival, held each October in Erfoud.\textsuperscript{328, 329}

\textsuperscript{323} Etain O’Carroll et al., \textit{Morocco} (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007), 454.
\textsuperscript{325} Etain O’Carroll et al., \textit{Morocco} (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007), 452–53.
\textsuperscript{327} Etain O’Carroll et al., \textit{Morocco} (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007), 453.
Dos and Don’ts

- Do take your shoes off before entering a home.
- Do bring gifts for the host and hostess when invited to their home.
- Do eat with your right hand because the left is used for sanitary needs.
- Do leave some food on your plate after eating to signal you have had enough.
- Do dress conservatively and avoid tight or revealing clothes.
- Do shake hands with persons of the same gender.
- Don’t enter a mosque without permission.
- Don’t photograph strangers without their permission.
- Don’t give the “thumbs up” gesture or gesture with your left hand.
- Don’t add salt to food; it is an insult to your host.
- Don’t give liquor, pork, items with logos, or figures of dogs or owls as gifts.
- Don’t use vulgar language within earshot of Moroccans. Many understand such slang and find it offensive.
- Don’t show the soles of your feet or shoes when sitting.
Chapter 3 Assessment

1. The terms “sister” or “uncle” may sometimes be used when addressing strangers.  
   True  
   Moroccans commonly use titles in formal situations and in addressing acquaintances. Sometimes family titles such as “sister” or “uncle” are used when greeting strangers.

2. The perception of others is of great importance to a Moroccan individual.  
   True  
   Moroccans take great care in maintaining a positive social standing and reputation because much of their self-worth depends upon the perceptions of others.

3. A Moroccan handshake is the same as an American one.  
   False  
   Moroccan handshakes are not as firm as the traditional American handshake, but they may last longer.

4. Siestas follow dinner.  
   False  
   Moroccans allow 2–4 hours for lunch, the largest meal of the day, and then take a siesta.

5. Left-handed people must be careful to only use their right hand in social interactions.  
   True  
   The right hand is used for all public interactions because the left hand is associated with sanitary activities.
CHAPTER 4: URBAN LIFE

Introduction

Like most countries, Morocco’s population in recent years has been moving from rural areas to cities. Land-use policy, a scarcity of arable land, frequent drought and crop failure, and the desire to seek better jobs and a higher standard of living in the cities stimulated this migration. ³³⁰, ³³¹

The rapid rate of urbanization has affected many aspects of the nation. Not only have demographics changed, but cultural expression and traditions have been affected. Although agriculture continues to be a major contributor to the life and economy of Morocco, the move to the cities has created pressure to diversify the economy and create new jobs. Greater acceptance of contraception, a decline in family size, increased levels of education, a delay in marriage age, and an increase in working women reflect social policy successes. ³³²

Urbanization Issues

Today, 58% of Moroccans live in urban areas. ³³³ This number is expected to increase, based on the current growth rate of cities and the declining rural population. ³³⁴ Urban influx has resulted in significant housing and utility shortages. The construction of informal housing greatly outpaced the development of standard residential infrastructure. Slums and shantytowns have swelled as a consequence of the influx into the cities. A 2005 study showed that nearly 25% of the population in Casablanca has lived in shantytowns for decades. ³³⁵

Lack of infrastructure constrains the delivery of safe water and sanitation. The increased water demand from additional residents and industrial activities makes the problems even worse: only 2% of residents have clean water, and only 17% have access to toilets.\textsuperscript{336, 337} Morocco also must find ways to meet the demands on its educational system, provide access to and meet increasing demands for healthcare, and increase employment opportunities, especially among the young.\textsuperscript{338}

Beyond securing decent housing and better living conditions, other problems accompany this migration. Perhaps the most significant is the link to fundamentalist Islamic radicalization and terrorism in impoverished urban neighborhoods. This creates security concerns for the nation and the people.\textsuperscript{339} To address such concerns, the government has initiated several programs to attempt to eradicate urban slums.\textsuperscript{340, 341}

**Work Problems in Urban Areas**

Unemployment is a serious challenge in metropolitan areas. The national unemployment rate is around 9%, but the rate in cities is higher (13.5%).\textsuperscript{342} The young, particularly those with vocational degrees, suffer the highest rates of unemployment, estimated as high as 50%.\textsuperscript{343, 344}

**Exchange 17: Who in your family has a job?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Are you the only person in your family who has a job?</th>
<th>Wash nta lwaah heed lee Khedaam fe'a-a-ela dyalek?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: No.</td>
<td>laa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{337} Jerry Erbach et al., “Morocco Urban Development Assessment” (paper for USAID/Morocco, Environmental Urban Division, November 1998), 11–12, \url{http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACD653.pdf} \\
\textsuperscript{339} Paul Puschmann, *Casablanca: A Demographic Miracle on Moroccan Soil?* (Netherlands: Uitgeverij Acco, 2011), 18–19, \url{http://kuleuven.academia.edu/PaulPuschmann/Books/463329/Casablanca_A_Demographic_Miracle_on_Moroccan_Soil} \\
\textsuperscript{341} Malcolm Borthwick, “Moroccan Efforts to Replace Slum,” BBC News, 21 September 2009, \url{http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/8266403.stm} \\
\textsuperscript{342} Siham Ali, “Morocco: Unemployment Rate Reaches 8.7 Percent in Q2,” 3 August 2011, \url{http://allafrica.com/stories/201108040757.html} \\
\textsuperscript{343} Malcolm Borthwick, “Moroccan Efforts to Replace Slum,” BBC News, 21 September 2009, \url{http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/8266403.stm} \\
\textsuperscript{344} Paul Silverstein, “Weighing Morocco’s New Constitution,” Middle East Research and Information Project, 5 July 2011, \url{http://www.merip.org/memo/memo070511}
Economic growth has not reduced unemployment, especially among youth. Although the government intended to create 250,000 new jobs annually through 2013, the global financial crisis has thwarted efforts. The recession cost thousands of jobs in the automotive and textile industries, and concerns about tourism further threaten success.345

Health Issues

Although improving, Morocco’s healthcare system is inadequate to meet the nation’s needs. The public sector provides free healthcare to residents, but most providers are in urban areas. Preventive services are provided by clinics, health centers, and local hospitals. Local public hospitals represent a second tier of services. There are some specialized medical offices and clinics for those with private insurance. Regional hospitals represent a third tier of care, and the fourth consists of university hospital centers in Rabat, Casablanca, Fès, and Marrakech.346

Suitable care for routine problems is easily available in cities but generally below Western standards.347 Ambulance services are not immediately available in medical emergencies.348 Most prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs can be purchased in cities, but newer prescription drugs may not be available. It is difficult to find an open pharmacy on the weekend.349

Exchange 18: Is there a hospital nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a hospital nearby?</th>
<th>wash kaayen shee SbeeTaR KReeb min hna?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, in the center of town.</td>
<td>aah, fiSonTer dyaal lemdeena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier:</td>
<td>Do you know what is wrong?</td>
<td>wash ‘Rafti shnoo waake’?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Laa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are specialists as well as foreign- and Western-trained doctors in the cities.350 But specialized, advanced, and emergency treatment may be limited or inadequate, and

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serious conditions may require one to leave the country to receive proper care. Do not expect to find physicians with advanced English-speaking skills. It may be necessary to ask for one’s condition to be documented in writing, preferably in French if documentation is unavailable in English. For foreigners, including those who are insured, cash is often the expected form of payment at Moroccan hospitals and clinics. It is due at the time services are rendered.

Preventive measures for common problems, such as diarrhea, are important. Exercise caution when selecting food and drink, and drink bottled water where possible. Avoid swimming off the coast of Casablanca because of water pollution.

Education and Schools in Cities

The educational system in urban centers is more effective and inclusive than in rural areas. The Moroccan educational system suffers significant problems in terms of quality, retention rates, and gender gaps. The adult literacy rate is 52.3%, with a higher percentage of literacy among men (65.7%) than women (39.6%). A majority of children enroll in and attend primary school, but only 60% enroll in secondary school, with many failing to attend or to advance to higher levels.

Exchange 19: Do your children go to school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do your children go to school?</th>
<th>wash wlaadek taymshyoo imedRaaSa?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 13% of the college-age population enrolls at the country’s institutions of higher education. These shortfalls occur despite Morocco investing 20% of its budget in education.

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The government requires children to complete 9 years of free public education. Enrollment and retention rates in these institutions are significantly higher in urban areas. Courses are taught in Arabic, with French taught as a second language. Spanish may be used in certain areas of the country, and English may be taught in some private schools. There are two different educational tracks in primary education: a modern track, largely based on the French educational system, and an “original” track, which emphasizes Arabic and Islamic culture, thought, and law. The modern track maintains significantly higher rates of enrollment than the original track.

There are three tracks at the secondary level: a general track emphasizing the sciences and humanities; a technical track focusing on engineering, economics, and agriculture; and a vocational track offering certification in professional fields. Primarily located in urban areas, the country’s universities and related institutions (such as polytechnics) offer higher education for certain secondary schools. The most famous of these institutions include the Muhammed V University and the Hassan II Agriculture and Veterinary Institute in Rabat. Also well-known are Karouine University in Fès, which has been a major center of Islamic studies for many centuries, and al-Akhawayn University, a private, English-language university in Ifrane.

Restaurants

In Morocco, dining out does not carry the same social significance as in Western cultures. Most Moroccans prefer to eat at home, where they maintain a tight-knit, familial atmosphere. As a result, Moroccan restaurants cater to tourists, expatriates, and wealthy Moroccans living in urban areas. Cafés are popular with Moroccan men, but function as social centers instead of eating establishments. Cafés offer sandwiches and brochettes (known in the West as kabobs), as well as an

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array of typical beverages.\textsuperscript{370}

**Exchange 20: I would like coffee.**

| Soldier: | I would like coffee or tea. | bgheet -aataay wla kahwa |
| Local: | Sure. | 'la Raas wel'eyn |

French-style cafés, which serve pastries and other snacks, are also relatively common in urban areas.

**Exchange 21: Do you have a dessert?**

| Soldier: | Do you have a dessert? | wash 'andkum shee deeseyR |
| Local: | Yes, we have crepes. | aah, 'andna lbeghReyR |

Upscale restaurants are limited to metropolitan areas and specialize in a variety of international flavors. French or French-influenced cuisine is common, although there are restaurants that serve traditional Moroccan dishes, such as \textit{bastilla} and \textit{meshoui}.\textsuperscript{371, 372}

**Exchange 22: What type of meat is this?**

| Soldier: | What type of meat is this? | shnoo haad lHam |
| Local: | Lamb. | Ighanmi |

At mid-priced or expensive restaurants, a service charge may be included in the bill.\textsuperscript{373} If not, it is appropriate to tip roughly 10\% at these restaurants, and perhaps a couple of dirhams (the unit of currency in Morocco) when dining at cafés.\textsuperscript{374}

\textit{Snaks} (kiosks) are nearly everywhere in Morocco and provide a variety of local food.\textsuperscript{375} When buying juice from vendors, it is a good idea to use a disposable cup or bring your own because the juice glasses are simply rinsed and reused. The cleanliness and quality of ingredients can vary, so follow the locals. Moroccans try to find the cleanest vendors selling the freshest ingredients.\textsuperscript{376}

\textsuperscript{372} Etain O’Carroll et al., \textit{Morocco} (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007), 454.
\textsuperscript{373} Etain O’Carroll et al., \textit{Morocco} (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007), 454.
\textsuperscript{374} Etain O’Carroll et al., \textit{Morocco} (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007), 459.
\textsuperscript{375} Etain O’Carroll et al., \textit{Morocco} (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007), 71.
\textsuperscript{376} Etain O’Carroll et al., \textit{Morocco} (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007), 70–71.
Marketplaces and Money

Markets

Shoppers have several choices regarding where to shop. The *souk* is the cheapest place to buy almost anything. Medina shops are more expensive, followed by stores in the new parts of the cities. Shops in rural areas are cheaper than those in urban areas, but the quality of the materials is lower and the selection is smaller.377

There are also many choices when shopping for food. The best and cheapest place to buy produce is at the weekly *souk*. The *souwiqa*, or little *souk*, is not as cheap, but it is open daily. The *hanut* is a little neighborhood shop that is more expensive, but is a good place to replace things you have just run out of. Many cities and larger towns have a *marché* or French-style market, which is a great place for one-stop shopping for vegetables, produce, staples, meat, and fish. The *supermarché* is an indoor supermarket that caters mostly to foreigners and stocks imported food. It can be a highly expensive alternative.378

All meat sold in Morocco has likely been killed recently. Pieces of meat are usually cut from whole carcasses hanging in shops. Fowl can be purchased alive or killed and dressed. If you want the chicken killed, it will be killed and plucked after you have selected it from a group of live birds.379

Exchange 23: Is the bazaar nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is the bazaar nearby?</th>
<th>Wash leblaSa dyaa{l} `ibaazaaR kaReba min hna?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, over there on the right.</td>
<td>aah, lheyh 'al leyman?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bargaining

In Morocco, shopping is often a prolonged process with much haggling and negotiation. Certain items and services with fixed or posted rates are not open to bargaining, but at *souks*, haggling is customary and expected. It is important to visit different stalls to compare prices and the quality of goods, and to become familiar with the market and its practices.380

**Exchange 24: May I examine this close up?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>May I examine this close up?</th>
<th>wash yemkin leeya nkalib haadi?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Sure.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A vendor’s initial asking price will almost certainly be high, and customers should respond with counteroffers starting at one-third the initial price. Depending upon the item, negotiation can be lengthy and may require several cups of mint tea.\(^{381}\) One should not demonstrate too much enthusiasm for a particular item; vendors view excessive interest as an opportunity to maintain a higher asking price.

**Exchange 25: Do you have any more of these?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you have any more of these?</th>
<th>wash 'andek shee weHdeen bHal haadu?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>laa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although vendors in tourist areas may speak some English, negotiations are conducted in French or Arabic. After a price has been agreed upon, the customer cannot rescind the offer, although demonstrating a willingness to forego a purchase may help during the negotiation.\(^{382}\)

**Money and Credit Cards**

The national official currency is the dirham. Not yet a hard currency, the dirham cannot be taken out of the country or purchased outside Morocco. Money is easily exchanged at banks or exchange bureaus, but the euro is the easiest currency to exchange. British pounds and U.S. dollars can also be exchanged. But U.S. currency issued before 2000 and F-series British pound notes will not be accepted for exchange.\(^{383}\)

**Exchange 26: Do you accept U.S. currency?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you accept U.S. currency?</th>
<th>wash mumkin nKhaleS bee dolaaR?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No we only accept</td>
<td>laa, tankebloo gheyRd-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Morocco runs on cash, and it is difficult to cash traveler’s checks or use credit cards. Some establishments catering to tourists are likely to take Visa or MasterCard, but one should always have a ready supply of dirhams. Many establishments will not accept large denominations of the dirham because it is difficult to make change. Be sure to collect smaller denominations to use in such instances.384

### Urban Traffic and Transportation

Morocco’s urban areas are serviced by trains, buses, and taxis. The major urban centers—Marrakech, Casablanca, Fès, Rabat, and Tangier—are connected via a modern freeway system, which includes tollways. Although traffic signals may be inoperative or difficult to view and street signs may be absent, urban roads are mostly in good condition.385, 386 Traffic congestion is typical. Moroccan driving habits are notoriously poor, and the country has a high rate of traffic accidents. Drivers must demonstrate great caution on Morocco’s roads.387, 388

### Rental Cars

Cars are available to rent but they can be expensive, particularly after fuel costs. Drivers must have a letter from the car company allowing them to leave the country before they drive into the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta.389 When possible, avoid driving in Casablanca. Congested traffic, lack of signals, narrow streets, and lack of traffic enforcement pose dangers.390

### Exchange 27: Where can I rent a car?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Where can I rent a car?</th>
<th>mneyn yemken nikRee shee Tonobeyl?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Downtown.</td>
<td>limdeena</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

386 Association for Safe International Road Travel, “Road Travel Report: Morocco,” 2006, 2, [http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/GPP/Sites/Morocco.pdf](http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/GPP/Sites/Morocco.pdf)
Many urban areas lack road signs, so it is important to carry a city map and, if necessary, ask for directions.

**Exchange 28: Which road leads to the airport?**

| Soldier: | Which road leads to the airport? | shnaahiya TReK lee kaadee lmaTaaR? |
| Local: | The road heading east. | TReK lee ghada leshaRK |

It is not a safe practice to drive at night in Morocco. Many streets lack sufficient lighting, making it difficult for drivers to see pedestrians and cyclists on the roadways. Some drivers fail to use their lights at night (it is legal for slow-moving vehicles to drive without them), while others use their bright lights continuously to combat the darkness.\(^3^9\), 392

**Taxis**

There are two types of taxis in Morocco. Grand taxis, or *taxiat kebira*, are shared taxis that run on established, long-distance routes, within the greater metropolitan and suburban area or between cities. Each passenger pays for one of six spaces in the taxi (which departs when full), although empty spaces can be purchased for extra room and private trips can be negotiated. But fares are generally a fixed amount. More expensive than buses, grand taxis offer quicker service between cities. They can be found at designated locations in urban areas.\(^3^9\)

**Exchange 29: Where can I get a cab?**

| Soldier: | Where can I get a cab? | feen yemken leeya nshid shee Taaksi? |
| Local: | Over there. | lheyh |

Be aware that grand-taxi drivers have a reputation for aggressive and erratic driving.\(^3^9\) Also, such taxis are not commonly equipped with seat belts.

Petit taxis are smaller and carry a maximum of three passengers. They offer request service within city limits. It is common, although not mandatory, for passengers to share

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these taxis as well, with the benefit of receiving lower fares. Most petit taxis have meters; if not, fares are negotiated, often with much haggling, before the trip.  

Exchange 30: Can you take me there?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Can you take me there?</th>
<th>wash yemkin lek tedeni lheyh?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, I can.</td>
<td>aah, mumkin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trains

Morocco’s passenger trains run in two general directions: east-west from the northeast border town of Oujda through Fès, Meknes, and Rabat to Casablanca; and north-south from Tangier to Sidi Kacem and from Casablanca to Marrakech. These lines intersect, offering connecting service; there are additional existing and planned routes. Classes of travel exist, but all service is comfortable, safe, punctual, and relatively inexpensive. The majority of train stations are in the cities’ French-built districts.

Exchange 31: Is there a train station nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a train station nearby?</th>
<th>wash kaayen shee maHeTa dyaal Traan KReba min hna?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>laa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Buses

City buses run on established routes and relatively consistent schedules. They are generally inexpensive, but they can be crowded, particularly during rush hours. Beware of pickpockets at these times. Avoid night buses in Essaouira because of the increased probability of crashes.

Exchange 32: Will the bus be here soon?

| Soldier: | Will the bus be here soon? | wash daaba ghaadi yjit-Tobes? |

---

Countrywide bus service is offered by a variety of companies, with the quality and age of their buses ranging from dilapidated to modern. Buses run on set routes and on a fixed (but often loose) schedule. They can be crowded, and their operators have a reputation for poor and erratic driving. Stations can be confusing and disorderly. Depending upon the locale and size of a station, ticket sellers can be found in booths, or they can be outside in the crowd or next to buses.\textsuperscript{401}

**Street Crime and Safety**

Morocco has a significant problem with street crime in major cities and tourist areas. Frequent crimes include panhandling, picking pockets, purse-snatching, and harassment of women. Thieves often rob vehicles stopped in traffic. Weapons, including knives, have been used. Such crimes may occur any time of day, and in isolated or crowded areas.\textsuperscript{402} Although kidnappings are not common, they do happen along the border regions and in the south.\textsuperscript{403}

Demonstrations occur frequently, especially in the larger cities. Avoid areas where demonstrations are taking place.\textsuperscript{404}

**Dealing with Street Vendors and Beggars**

Morocco’s streets are filled with between 200,000–500,000 beggars.\textsuperscript{405, 406} Although some are legitimately poor and destitute, the government estimates that 62% are professional beggars.\textsuperscript{407}

One of the “Five Pillars” of Islam is zakat, the donation of alms to the poor, a common practice in Morocco. Muslims believe that such acts of generosity will bring *baraka*, or blessings, to those who perform them. Typically, a gift of a few dirhams is more than

sufficient but not mandatory. It is inappropriate to completely ignore beggars or to treat them rudely. Always give money to an adult rather than to a child. Visitors who do not wish to give may simply say “Allah yasahel,” or “May God improve your situation.”

Exchange 33: Give me money.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local:</th>
<th>Give me money.</th>
<th>'Teyni lefloos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soldier:</td>
<td>I don’t have any.</td>
<td>maa‘indeesh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When giving money, maintain an impersonal tone. Try to differentiate between bonafide beggars and street hustlers. Hustlers will more commonly approach you, rather than waiting for you to pass, and they will often speak French or English instead of Arabic. Boys and young men often make up this group.

Guides, both official and unofficial, are widespread in Morocco and can be helpful or a nuisance. When new to the area, hiring a guide with local expertise may be useful. Official guides can be found through tourist offices and hotel services. But much more common are unofficial guides, known as faux guides, and touts, or solicitors who earn commissions for guiding tourists to certain local shops. Unofficial guides can be hired at cheaper rates (in the form of tips), but the quality of service may vary. In any case, payments should only be made to guides after their services have been rendered. If you do not wish to use a guide, simply refuse his services in a polite but firm and confident manner. Solicitors may be persistent, but it is important not to treat them rudely.

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Chapter 4 Assessment

1. Unemployment is no longer a problem in Morocco.  
   **False**  
   Unemployment is a serious and ongoing problem in Morocco, particularly in metropolitan areas and among the young.

2. Roughly half of all Moroccans are considered illiterate.  
   **True**  
   As of 2010, the nation’s adult literacy rate was 52.3%, with a higher percentage of literacy among men (65.7%) than women (39.6%).

3. Morocco’s urban development has been a slow and gradual process.  
   **False**  
   Most of Morocco’s urbanization has taken place in the last 40 years. Between 1971 and 1994, the number of cities in the country tripled.

4. The Moroccan currency, the dirham, cannot be taken out of the country.  
   **True**  
   It is illegal to export dirhams; they can only be acquired in Morocco.

5. Grand taxis are usually private.  
   **False**  
   Grand taxis, or *taxiat kebira*, are shared taxis (up to six people) that run on established, long-distance routes and generally have fixed rates.
CHAPTER 5: RURAL LIFE

Introduction

There has been a stark, historical division between urban and rural areas. Rural Morocco has been the traditional home of indigenous Berber tribes, also known collectively as Imazighen, or singularly as Amazigh. Despite the longstanding and prevailing influence of Arab culture in Morocco, the Berbers have retained their distinct languages, identity, and traditions. These linguistic and cultural traits are what distinguish Berbers from the Arab population; genetic differences between the two groups are negligible and 99% of the country’s population is categorized ethnically as Arab-Berber.

The cultural autonomy of the Berber tribes stems largely from their isolation. The Berber-dominated regions of the northern highlands, central mountains, and southern and eastern plateaus and deserts proved less accessible and less hospitable to invading or occupying foreigners. The Arab-dominated Atlantic coastal plains are known as bilad al-makhzan, “government land,” while the Berber-dominated interior is termed bilad al-siba, “land of abandonment” or “land of dissidence.”

Today, the effects of this division are seen not only in linguistic and cultural traditions, but also in socioeconomic disparity. Visitors to rural regions, particularly those populated by Berbers, will observe a notable lack of modern infrastructure, services, and government assistance compared to the urban areas of the Atlantic coastal plains and plateaus. But because the vast majority of Berbers are Muslims, rural residents share the same religious values and practices as urban residents. Rural Moroccans may be more traditional than city dwellers, who have had greater exposure to foreign culture,

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414 Berber peoples are located throughout Northern Africa; there are many distinct tribes within the larger Berber designation and within Morocco. For a more complete discussion of the Berber tribes in Morocco and in Africa, see David M. Hart, Tribe and Society in Rural Morocco (London: Frank Cass, 2000).
particularly European.\textsuperscript{425} Visitors to Morocco’s rural regions should be prepared for a lack of amenities and for traditional values, both Arab and Berber.

**Tribal Distribution and Settlements**

Many groups and subgroups of Imazighen are dispersed throughout rural Morocco. There are three major tribes, each grouped by region and language. In the Rif Mountains of northeastern Morocco, Berber tribes known as Irifiyen (singular Arifi) speak \textit{Tarafit}.\textsuperscript{426} The Berbers of central and southeast-central Morocco, called Imazighen (originally the subgroups), speak \textit{Central Tamazight}, and in southwestern Morocco, the Ishilhayen subgroup (singular Ashilhay) of the Shluh or Swasa (singular Susi or Soussi) Berber people speak \textit{Tashelhit}.\textsuperscript{427, 428, 429}

Berber settlements vary by region. In the northern uplands and central mountains, Berber people traditionally live in small villages on hillsides or hilltops. In these regions, the surrounding land is often terraced to create agricultural tracts, and homes and structures are typically made of adobe, stone, or earth.\textsuperscript{430} In the Rif Mountains, single-level individual homes, situated far apart, were once common. Multistoried, tightly grouped complexes are now prevalent in the central mountains and southeast (primarily in the Anti-Atlas range and surrounding deserts), and villages are often known as \textit{ksour}, or “castles,” because of their fortified design. \textit{Ksour} consist of attached, multistoried houses, each of which traditionally served as a home to several families from the same tribe. In the desert regions of the southeast and southwest, Berber tribes live in settlements in human-created oases.\textsuperscript{431} In the southwest, houses may resemble \textit{ksour}, but they also share features common to the houses of the northern mountains.\textsuperscript{432} In less remote rural areas that have been exposed to greater Arab influence, larger villages may contain a traditional \textit{medina}, or historic center.

\textsuperscript{430} \textit{Encyclopedia Britannica Online}, “Morocco: Settlement Patterns: Traditional Regions,” 2011, \url{http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/392604/Morocco#}
\textsuperscript{431} \textit{Encyclopedia Britannica Online}, “Morocco: Settlement Patterns: Traditional Regions,” 2011, \url{http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/392604/Morocco#}
Land Distribution and Ownership

Morocco lacks a comprehensive policy regarding land titles. Most land is held collectively by tribes or jointly owned by multigenerational families. Collective land cannot be sold on the formal market and is difficult to register under formal law.\footnote{USAID Land Tenure and Property Rights Portal, “Morocco,” 20 January 2011, http://usaidlandtenure.net/usaidltprproducts/country-profiles/morocco}

Formal and customary law recognizes several types of land tenure. Approximately 28\% is private, freehold land that may be held, used, or transferred. Family members eligible to inherit must consent to any transactions. Under Islamic law, private ownership rights are given to anyone who has held the land for at least a decade.\footnote{USAID Land Tenure and Property Rights Portal, “Morocco,” 20 January 2011, http://usaidlandtenure.net/usaidltprproducts/country-profiles/morocco}

Privately owned agricultural land is handed down through male heirs and is either divided almost exclusively among male offspring or maintained as a single tract. Few women own land, despite recent legal reforms. Women generally receive only a percentage (one-half or one-third) of a male’s share, but some regions have equal inheritance rights.\footnote{USAID Land Tenure and Property Rights Portal, “Morocco,” 20 January 2011, http://usaidlandtenure.net/usaidltprproducts/country-profiles/morocco}

The term “usufruct” refers to the right to farm land belonging to someone else; individuals using the land are not the actual owners. Nearly 42\% of all land is held by tribes with the state as trustee.\footnote{USAID Land Tenure and Property Rights Portal, “Morocco,” 20 January 2011, http://usaidlandtenure.net/usaidltprproducts/country-profiles/morocco}

“Guich land” refers to land given to members of the military by the monarchy. Although the state holds private domain rights, individuals possess usage rights. Recent reforms have resulted in much of this land being reclaimed by the state. Remaining parcels are insecure because the state is likely to reclaim these to meet land demands.\footnote{USAID Land Tenure and Property Rights Portal, “Morocco,” 20 January 2011, http://usaidlandtenure.net/usaidltprproducts/country-profiles/morocco}

About 30\% of Morocco’s land is purely state land, used for parks, roads, and forests. But nearly 400,000 hectares (988,420 acres) of this land is agricultural. It is possible to obtain a leasehold for up to 40 years on these spaces.\footnote{USAID Land Tenure and Property Rights Portal, “Morocco,” 20 January 2011, http://usaidlandtenure.net/usaidltprproducts/country-profiles/morocco}
**MOROCCAN Cultural Orientation**

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**Exchange 34: Do you own this land?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you own this land?</th>
<th>wash haad l-aRD dyalek?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lack of formal documentation of ownership has seriously hampered investment potential in rural areas. Without a title, farmers are generally unable to borrow money to invest in and improve their land.439

**Rural Economy and Livelihood**

Rural livelihoods depend on small-scale subsistence farming and animal husbandry.440

**Exchange 35: Where do you work, sir?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Where do you work, sir?</th>
<th>feyn tatKhdem, aaseedi?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>I am a farmer, sir.</td>
<td>filaaH aa aa seedi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wheat, barley, and other cereals are the most common crops, although figs, olives, almonds, walnuts, and vegetables are typical.441 Cannabis (used to make hashish) is a significant cash crop in the Rif Mountains.442, 443 In the pre-Saharan and Saharan areas, dates, alfalfa, corn, wheat, and barley are major crops.444 Plowing is often done with cows and a donkey or mule. The seasonal migration of livestock from higher to lower elevations is common in certain areas. During these migrations, shepherds live in small goat-hair tents. Other small-scale livestock holdings include cows, goats, and chickens.445 Rural regions in the coastal plains maintain larger agricultural and livestock operations, benefitting from richer soil and increased access to irrigation.446

The Moroccan agricultural industry is consistently vulnerable to drought, most recently in 2007 when a major drought led to significantly decreased agricultural yields.447 Such

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In recent years, overgrazing in certain areas (particularly in the mountains) has led to deforestation, increased erosion, and loss of farmland. Erosion has also negatively affected the country’s water supply because the increased sedimentation of reservoirs has decreased their overall capacity.449 About 75% of the nation’s poor live in rural areas where agriculture is particularly unproductive or difficult to sustain.450, 451 The central mountains and the eastern and southern steppes and deserts are among these areas, and their often unfruitful, impoverished conditions have fueled the country’s rural-to-urban migration as well as the mass labor migration of Moroccans to Europe.452

The trading of foodstuffs, handicrafts, and other goods in rural areas occurs at marketplaces, or *souks*. Rural markets, held weekly, have a variety of goods including modern, foreign products. One Berber tribe, the Aith Waryaghar of the Rif Mountains, holds a unique market reserved for women.453

**Rural Transportation Issues**

*Driving in Rural Areas*

Driving in Morocco can be hazardous because of poor road conditions and a lack of respect for rules of the road. Driving at night is even more dangerous and should be avoided.454

In many rural areas, Morocco’s road system is underdeveloped and in poor condition. Modern freeways connect the major urban centers and the two-lane primary roads that run through rural areas to other cities. But the secondary routes and unsealed roads of remote regions are unreliable, often narrow, and dangerous.455, 456 This is particularly true

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in the Rif and Atlas Mountains, where narrow roads wind through steep, rugged terrain.  No roads exist in the Toubkal Massif region.

Pedestrians, motorbikes, animal-drawn vehicles, and bicyclists may present unforeseen obstacles on Moroccan roadways, particularly at night on unlit roads. Rural roads are also subject to flash flooding. Heavy snowfall may close roads in mountainous areas, and desert winds can reduce visibility or cause damage to vehicles. In desert areas, some paved roads end suddenly, changing into dirt or gravel, and loose rocks can shatter windshields.

Policemen routinely pull over vehicles for inspection and may take a driver’s license if a fine is not paid on the spot. Police checkpoints in city entrances and certain rural areas are common. Be prepared to present a passport and a driver’s license.

**Exchange 36: Please get out of the car.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Please get out of the car.</th>
<th>KhRuj mint Tonobeel laah yKhaleek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>OK.</td>
<td>waaKha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Service centers, such as gas stations and facilities with mechanics, are often limited and far apart in rural areas. Unleaded gas is rare in rural areas, but diesel fuel is readily available.

**Exchange 37: Is there a gas station nearby?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a gas station nearby?</th>
<th>kaayen shee STaSyon dyaal leySaanS KaReeba min hinaa?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


Exchange 38: Is there an auto mechanic nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?</th>
<th>kaayen shee meekanisyaan KReeb min hna?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Buses, Trains, and Taxis*

Morocco’s extensive bus system runs routes throughout the country, offering an inexpensive (although not necessarily safe or comfortable) form of travel into rural areas. But buses may be overcrowded, and operators are known for poor driving habits. Visitors should also be aware that schedules are often loosely followed (depending upon the company), and stations can be raucous.

Morocco’s train system is generally safe, comfortable, punctual, and relatively affordable. But service is limited to the Atlantic coastal plains and northern Morocco. There is a route that runs in the eastern part of the country, parallel to the Algerian border. The Atlas Mountains and the southern and eastern steppes and deserts are not presently serviced by train.

Grand taxi service is available for travel between rural villages. As in urban centers, these taxis offer shared rides to set destinations. In mountainous regions, taxi vehicles may consist of a van or a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Taxi drivers often fail to use good driving habits.

*Trucks and 4WD Vehicles*

Pickup trucks or four-wheel-drive vehicles are commonly used by Moroccans in rural areas that lack public transportation. These vehicles are particularly common in areas with rough unsealed roads, such as the Atlas Mountains. Passengers sit in the back of the truck, and riding conditions can be rough. Frequency and availability is irregular, although service is common on market days.

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470 Association for Safe International Road Travel, “Road Travel Report: Morocco,” 2006, 10, [http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/GPP/Sites/Morocco.pdf](http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/GPP/Sites/Morocco.pdf)
Health Issues

Because most healthcare centers are in urban areas, access to medical facilities and healthcare is greatly limited or unavailable in rural Morocco. Outpatient care is provided by mobile medical teams, pharmacies, and clinics. Clinics may have a doctor or nurse and provide rudimentary care or emergency treatment. If possible, avoid public healthcare in rural areas. Private clinics and hospitals can provide adequate routine care but may be difficult to access and expensive, requiring up-front payment.

It is critical to use preventive measures to avoid the need for medical treatment while in rural Morocco. Use insect repellent to avoid the risk of diseases such as typhus and malaria. Avoid swimming in fresh water because parasitic infections may result. A lack of treated water and sanitation services pose additional health risks. Drink only bottled water.

Other potential medical problems include altitude sickness (particularly in the Atlas Mountains) and waterborne and food-borne diseases. Avoid unpasteurized dairy products, and wash and peel fruit before eating.

Ask locals for assistance or for information about local medical facilities.

Exchange 39: My arm is broken, can you help me?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>My arm is broken, can you help me?</th>
<th>yedi mhaRsa, yemken lek t'aaweni?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, I can help you.</td>
<td>aah, yemken leeya n'aawnekk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

479 In 2008, only 60% of the rural population had access to improved drinking water, and only 52% used adequate sanitation facilities. See UNICEF, “At a Glance: Morocco: Statistics,” 2 March 2010, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/morocco_statistics.html
Exchange 40: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a medical clinic nearby?</th>
<th>wash kaayen shee SbeeTaar kReeb min hna?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, over there.</td>
<td>aah, lheyh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In less urgent situations, ask about clinics located farther away, such as in a nearby village or a city.

Exchange 41: Is Dr. Alaoui in, sir?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is Dr. Alaoui in, sir?</th>
<th>wash kaayen Tbeebl'alawi aseedi?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>laa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hospitals and clinics commonly require payment up front in cash for medical services. In rural areas, expect to pay for basic medical supplies including bandages.\(^{483, 484}\) Carry any necessary prescription medicine. In remote areas, clinics may use nontraditional forms of treatment, such as herbal medicine.\(^{485}\)

**Rural Schools**

Educational quality and availability is often limited in rural areas. Rates of attendance, retention, and matriculation remain low, particularly for girls. Only 3 out of 4 rural girls enroll in primary school, and for rural women aged 15 years or older, the literacy rate has been estimated as low as 10%\(^{486, 487}\). (Other estimates place it between 17%–25%).\(^{488}\) Rural poverty, lack of infrastructure (schools and roads), and traditional attitudes about schooling for girls significantly contribute to the inadequacy of rural schools. Thus, nearly 70% of rural residents are illiterate.\(^{489, 490}\)

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Exchange 42: Is there a school nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a school nearby?</th>
<th>wash kayen shee medRaaSa KReeba min hna?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In recent years, the government and many organizations have been working to increase rural student enrollment and raise the literacy rate for Moroccan women. These efforts include the establishment of rural literacy centers, which have drawn high percentages of female participants. Another significant development in the educational system, particularly regarding Berbers, was the official incorporation of Berber languages into the public school curriculum in 2003. This recognition of Berber languages has been well received because allowing Berber youth to use their native tongue may make them more enthusiastic and successful in school.

Outside the public school system, Quranic schools are often the only source of education for many rural Moroccan youth. These schools teach Arabic and Islamic verse, thought, and law; typical school subjects may be absent from the curriculum. Traditionally, these schools have been more readily accepted by remote, rural communities, who may view state-run operations with suspicion.

Gender Roles

As in urban areas, the gender roles of rural residents are based on patriarchal, Islamic tradition. Men possess greater freedom and higher status than women. The social segregation of men and women and the association of women with the private, domestic sphere are common in rural areas. In Berber communities, women traditionally perform the cooking, housework, and some agricultural activities, such as harvesting crops and...
milking animals. Men plant crops or tend livestock, and sometimes hunt. In the past, market activities were reserved for men. But it is now common for women to be in charge of certain market duties. Children of either gender may be involved in goat herding, and girls often look after younger siblings. Boys are typically freer to attend school, whereas girls are frequently required to stay home and work.498

If the male head of household migrates for employment (which is common), women take on further responsibilities and authority in the home. Women then are heavily involved in the daily operations of the household, performing domestic and outside labor duties.

Village Life: Who Is in Charge?

Prior to the mid-20th century, the social organization of the Berbers was based primarily on patrilineage and the extended family (generally ranging from four to six generations). The broader social group comprised the following units, in order of increasing size: patrilineage, local community, tribal section, tribe. But since Moroccan independence and the onset of widespread labor emigration, Berber societies have increasingly emphasized the importance of the core (nuclear) family. Today, rural communes are the basic unit of local sociopolitical organization, and local elders from the commune form a council, jemaa, that meets on a weekly basis (usually at the market).499, 500 All members of the jemaa are adult males.501 Rural villages have a muqaddam, or village leader, who is elected by the village council.502, 503

Exchange 43: Can you take me to your leader?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Can you take me to your leader?</th>
<th>wash yemken lek tideeni l'and lkaayed dyalkum?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Exchange 44: Respected leader, we need your help.

| Soldier: | Respected leader, we need your help / advice / opinion. | see lkaayed, laah yKhaleek, bgheenak t'aawina / bgheenak tenSeHnaa / bgheena nistaashRok |
| Local: | Yes. | waaKha |

Thus, regionalism has become a significant social and administrative driver. Because of poverty and scarce resources, rural communes and their councils often lack the financial means to implement local policy. Thus, several levels of state government exist beyond the rural commune.

Border Crossings and Checkpoints

To address regional security issues and reduce Morocco’s incidence of traffic accidents, the police have implemented a countrywide system of checkpoints and roadblocks. Checkpoints are commonly located near the entrances of cities and towns, and roadblocks may be found in certain areas in and around Western Sahara, near the Algerian border (which has long been closed), and in cannabis-producing regions such as the Rif Mountains.

Exchange 45: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

| Soldier: | Where is the nearest checkpoint? | feen kaayen kRab baRaaj min hna? |
| Local: | It’s two kilometers | b'eed b'ooj keeloomitRaat |

Often, the basic purpose of such stoppages is to authenticate driving licenses and inspect the vehicle’s condition. Visitors should be prepared to present their passport, international driver’s license, and perhaps the vehicle’s documentation.

Exchange 46: Is this all the ID you have?

| Soldier: | Is this all the ID you have? | wash haadi heeya biTakat ta'Reef iwaHeeda lee 'andek? |
| Local: | Yes. | aah |

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Highened security measures have been put in place throughout the country because of terrorist bombings and kidnappings in Morocco and neighboring countries in recent years. Increased numbers of official security personnel, in uniform or undercover, operate in public areas.509 A bombing in Marrakech in April 2011 led to further security measures, including cordoning off other cities. Additional security forces have been deployed throughout the nation.510

### Landmines

The UN estimates that roughly 120,000 sq km (46,332 sq mi) of Western Sahara contain landmines and explosive remnants of war, such as unexploded ordnance.511 The area around the massive central berm, or fortified wall, running through Western Sahara is populated with large numbers of landmines. There are multiple berms in Western Sahara. The primary berm, which is 2,400 km (1,491 mi) long, divides Western Sahara into two sections. The western and northern portion is controlled by Morocco, and the eastern and southern portion is controlled by the Polisario Front.512, 513 This heavily mined stretch of land is thought to be the world’s longest continuous minefield.514 Landmine-related fatalities and injuries involving soldiers and civilians are relatively frequent throughout Western Sahara.515

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510 Al Jazeera, “Morocco Steps up Security after Café Blast,” 29 April 2011,  

511 Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor, “Morocco,” 20 June 2010,  

512 János Besenyő, *Western Sahara* (Budapest: Publikon Publishers, 2009), 125,  
[http://kalasnyikov.hu/dokumentumok/besenyo_western_sahara.pdf](http://kalasnyikov.hu/dokumentumok/besenyo_western_sahara.pdf)

513 Landmine Action, “Survey and Clearance: Western Sahara,” 2008,  

514 Landmine Action, “Survey and Clearance: Western Sahara,” 2008,  

515 Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor, “Morocco,” 20 June 2010,  
Exchange 48: Is this area mined?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this area mined?</th>
<th>wash haad lminTaKa feelah alghaam?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Morocco is not a signatory to the Mine Ban Treaty of 1997 (also known as the Ottawa Convention), a major international pact that bans the production, stockpiling, and use of landmines. The Moroccan state has advocated the treaty, but it cites the territorial conflict over Western Sahara as the major impediment to its official cooperation with the agreement. In recent years, however, Morocco has increased efforts to remove mines in certain areas.

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Chapter 5 Assessment

1. There is little difference between urban and rural Morocco because almost all Moroccans are Muslim.
   **False**
   Although Islam binds the Moroccan population together, there is a stark, historical division between urban and rural areas.

2. The Berber population of Morocco tends to live in rural areas.
   **True**
   Rural Morocco has been the traditional home of indigenous Berber tribes, also known collectively as Imazighen.

3. A majority of Morocco’s poor population lives in rural areas.
   **True**
   About 75% of the country’s poor live in rural areas where agriculture is unproductive or difficult to sustain.

4. Water from streams in rural areas is safe to drink and swim in.
   **False**
   Visitors should only drink bottled water; they should avoid swimming in fresh water because parasitic infections may occur.

5. Policemen may take away a driver’s license if a fine is not paid immediately.
   **True**
   Policemen routinely pull over vehicles for inspection and may take a driver’s license if a fine is not paid on the spot.
CHAPTER 6: FAMILY LIFE

Introduction

Life in Morocco revolves around the family, which serves as the primary social and financial support for the average Moroccan. Family welfare, relations, and having children are of overriding importance; work and other relationships are subordinate. The notion of family honor, which each member is expected to uphold, is a keystone of society. In Morocco, a person’s actions and demeanor almost always reflect on the family, and family members are inextricably bound by reputation and shared responsibility. This concept of honor and the familial bond is valued over everything else, and it has far-reaching significance for social values and customs.518, 519

Because of the family’s overarching importance, it is the prime subject of interest and topic of conversation in daily life.

Exchange 49: How is your family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>How is your family?</th>
<th>shuKhbaaR maaleyn daaR?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>They are doing fine, thank you.</td>
<td>biKheyR lHamdu laah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visitors should not interpret questions about their family as intrusive, but as a typical and appropriate topic that helps Moroccans become acquainted with newcomers and demonstrate interest in them.520

Typical Household

In Morocco, households may consist of nuclear and extended families. Family composition is determined through male lineage. Male descendants remain in the family household, and female descendants join the households of their husbands. In extended families, unmarried children and married sons along with their wives and children live with the two elder parents.521 Three generations—grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and siblings—may live in a single household.

Exchange 50: Does your family live here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Does your family live here?</th>
<th>wash l'aa-eela dyaalek tatskun hna?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Household makeup varies by region and class. Affluent families in modern urban areas may maintain smaller, independent nuclear households. In poor rural areas, it is more common for extended families to live together in one home.522, 523

Exchange 51: How many people live here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>How many people live in this house?</th>
<th>shHaal min waHid ti’eesh fhaad daar?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Ten.</td>
<td>'ashRa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Historically, the elderly were cared for by their families, and often lived with a son. But this trend is diminishing, partly because of migration to other countries and poor economic conditions. The growing number of older persons, declining birth rates, and the shift to nuclear families suggest that caring for the elderly will become an issue in the near future.524, 525

Exchange 52: Is this your entire family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this your entire family?</th>
<th>wash l'aa-eela dyaal kulha heya haadi?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of family members are becoming more nuanced in today’s Morocco. Traditionally, men were authority figures who were responsible for the financial welfare of the household, while women cared for the children and family.526, 527, 528 But changes in the family code in 2004 declared that men and women are equally responsible for family welfare and that a wife no longer has to obey her husband.529, 530

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523 Fatima Sadiqi, Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco (Boston: Brill, 2003), 69.
526 Fatima Sadiqi, Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco (Boston: Brill, 2003), 54.
527 Fatima Sadiqi, Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco (Boston: Brill, 2003), 61–64.
529 Sandy Donovan, Teens in Morocco (Minneapolis: Compass Books, 2008), 49.
Modernization has allowed more women to work outside the home (approximately 28%) and afforded them a larger role in the family.\textsuperscript{531} But because of the patriarchal customs of Islamic culture and the gender gap in education, it is still more common for men to work in the public sphere than women. In 2009, the labor force participation rate of men was much higher (80%) than that of women (26%).\textsuperscript{532} Change is more rapid and visible in urban areas, but rural women are increasingly becoming entrepreneurs in the informal economy (39.3%).\textsuperscript{533, 534}

Elderly family members often maintain an active role in the home and are well-respected and cared for.\textsuperscript{535} Girls learn domestic duties at a young age and are responsible for the care of younger siblings.\textsuperscript{536}

Exchange 53: Do you have any brothers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you have any brothers?</th>
<th>Wash 'andek shee Khoot?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Boys have greater freedom than girls. Depending on the family’s finances, boys may or may not be required to do domestic chores, such as running errands.\textsuperscript{537} Boys are allowed to go to school, whereas girls do not always have that option.\textsuperscript{538} In poor families, boys and girls perform a variety of tasks, such as goat herding, to contribute to the family’s livelihood.\textsuperscript{539}

\textsuperscript{535} Timothy L. Gall and Jeneen Hobby, eds., \textit{Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life: vol. 1—Africa}, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Gale Cengage Learning, 2009), 392.\
Status of Children and the Elderly

Children

Children are highly prized and loved in Morocco. Children commonly grow up surrounded by their extended kin, who share the responsibilities of raising and socializing them. Children are taught above all to be respectful to adults. The child’s character directly reflects on the parents and can be a source of pride or shame. Children are allowed to remain emotionally dependent on parents, especially the mother.540

Child labor is an issue in Morocco. Beginning in 2004, the legal age for employment was raised from 12 to 15 years. But children, especially from rural areas, are sometimes contracted out by their parents or sold by orphanages to become virtual slaves—in the guise of maids—in wealthy families.541 Girls as young as 6 years of age have reportedly been forced into labor.542

Elders

The elderly are generally highly respected in Morocco. Traditionally, the extended family took care of elderly parents and grandparents. But that appears to be changing as Morocco adopts modern and Western values. Although nearly 78% of the elderly receive assistance from relatives, a growing number need support from outside sources, including the government.543 With an expanding elderly population, and the inability or unwillingness of families to take them in, the situation for the elderly is of growing concern to the government. The number of residential senior centers is increasing in an effort to address the problem.544

Marriage, Divorce, and Birth

Marriage

Marriage is an essential stage in Moroccan life and a significant form of social bonding between families. It is a socioeconomic contract rather than a romantic, love-based union. Traditionally, Moroccan marriages were arranged and negotiated between the two participating families, but today this is less common, especially in urban areas.545, 546

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Choosing a marriage partner is similar throughout the country. Once a potential bride is selected, a go-between (*khattabat*) visits the bride’s family to determine suitability and estimate the bride price. If all goes well, a formal engagement is announced.547

The groom’s family then visits the bride’s parents to determine a wedding date. During these visits, the engagement can be terminated. Families agree on a dowry and sign a formal contract.548 For his payment of a bride price, the groom receives the bride and a dowry to support the couple’s household.549, 550, 551

Because Islam is passed through the male line, Muslim men are allowed to marry non-Muslim women (although this is uncommon), but Muslim women may not marry non-Muslim men.552 After marriage, the woman traditionally moves into the home of the husband, who often lives with his parents and extended family.553, 554 Since many families now live in nuclear households, some newlyweds set up their own household near relatives.555

The law established 18 as the legal age for marriage.556 Parents may obtain a waiver allowing minor children to marry.557 Child marriage (under the age of 18) may be increasing.558, 559, 560

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553 Fatima Sadiqi, *Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 57.
556 Prior to 2003, the minimum age for females to marry was 15.
Property acquired during the marriage is shared between the spouses. Polygamy is considerably more difficult to practice legally. Women have the right to officially stipulate that potential husbands maintain a single marriage, and can divorce if the husband wishes to marry a second wife. Marrying a second wife requires legal authorization and the assurance that the wives will be treated equally.  

**Divorce**

According to the 2004 *Moudawana* family code, women now have the right to initiate divorce. Valid reasons for divorce include physical abuse, failure to provide financial support, and unwarranted absence. Previously, men could divorce wives without their consent simply through the unofficial process of verbal repudiation. Today, both parties consent and the process must be administrated through the courts. The family code also ensures that the court system oversees the payment of alimony. Under certain circumstances, women have increased custodial rights. Children aged 15 and older may choose their guardian in the event of divorce. The family code also ensures that throughout the divorce process there is opportunity for reconciliation. (In recent years, Morocco has experienced more marriages and slightly lower divorce rates, which have been attributed to the new family laws.)

Socially, there is often a sense of shame in experiencing a divorce. This is particularly true for women, who may have difficulty remarrying. If uneducated and without a career, women may lack financial support.

**Birth**

In rural Morocco, it is still common (and often necessary) for babies to be born at home, but in urban areas many mothers give birth in hospitals or clinics. Access to maternal care has improved in recent years, with a decrease in maternal mortality rates. However, access to healthcare remains a challenge in rural areas.

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healthcare during the prenatal period or the birthing process is far from universal. In recent years, 61% of births occurred in institutional facilities, and 63% were attended by a person trained in childbirth or healthcare, such as a doctor, nurse, or midwife. The percentage of pregnant women who received prenatal care was slightly higher, at 68%. In 2009 Moroccan women had an average of 2.3 children per woman.

Exchange 56: Are these your children?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Are these your children?</th>
<th>wash haadoo wlaadek?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>aah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Morocco the birth of a child is a momentous occasion marked with celebration and ritual. Festivities vary by region, but gatherings of family and friends to offer gifts to the mother and child are common. Because Islamic culture is patriarchal and Moroccan families are patrilineal, boys are especially celebrated. When a boy is born, three “cries of joy” welcome the infant, but only a single cry welcomes a female. In some villages, women who give birth to a daughter are humiliated with the hide of a dead sheep placed at the door.

Family Social Events

Weddings

Moroccan weddings are large and festive celebrations that take place in the evening and involve many customary steps. They last for several days to a week. In recent years, depending upon the region and the socioeconomic background of the family, many traditional customs have been replaced, altered, or minimized to reflect contemporary culture.

Before a traditional wedding, the bride’s female attendants (consisting of older married relatives and friends) give her a purifying milk bath and use henna dye to paint her hands

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571 Fatima Sadiqi, Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco (Boston: Brill, 2003), 59.
and feet with elaborate designs.\textsuperscript{575, 576} Today, in some areas of the country, many brides forego this tradition. But they often employ a person to henna small designs on the hands of the wedding guests.\textsuperscript{577}

The wedding is traditionally separated into two receptions, one for men and one for women.\textsuperscript{578, 579} Today, in certain areas, there is increased interaction between the two parties. Food, traditional music, and dancing are common to the festivities.\textsuperscript{580}

\textbf{Exchange 57: Congratulations on your wedding!}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Congratulations on your wedding!</th>
<th>mebrook 'leekum l'eRaasiya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>We are honored you could attend.</td>
<td>meRHbaa beek, nhaaR kbeeR haada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the reception, the groom eventually seeks out his bride, who is carried out on a table and presented to him and the party.\textsuperscript{581} Moroccan tradition suggests that the bride circle her new home three times before entering it as her own.\textsuperscript{582, 583}

\textbf{Funerals and Memorials}

Islamic custom shapes the traditions associated with death and burial. When possible, a Muslim is visited before death by family and friends, who give comfort and offer religious support by reciting Quranic verses. Islamic tradition suggests that a Muslim’s final words declare devoted faith: “I bear witness that there is no god but Allah.”\textsuperscript{584}

According to Arab and Muslim traditions, burial should take place within 24 hours. Preparations begin shortly after death and are performed in the home.\textsuperscript{585} Those present at

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Sher Azam, Funeral Directors, “Islamic Directors,” 2011, http://www.sherazam.co.uk/muslim-funeral-director-uk/
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the time of death close the eyes of the deceased and place a clean sheet over the body. Before the funeral procession, family members wash and shroud the body in a white sheet.586

After the body has been prepared, it is carried to the burial site by male relatives and friends, who recite Quranic verse as they march. When the body is placed in the grave (usually without a coffin), it is laid on its right side, with the head directed south, to ensure that the deceased faces Mecca.587 Unlike many Western cultures, Muslim customs do not include tombstones, ornate markers, and flowers.588 Relatives, friends, and community members visit the home of the bereaved family to offer food and condolence. Together, they hold a dinner, or l-āsha, and read from the Quran.589

A woman who has lost her husband wears white, the color of mourning, for 40 days.590

*Name-Giving Parties (subu’)*

Seven days after the birth of a child, the family names the newborn and holds a celebratory feast to mark the occasion. It is customary to give small gifts to the baby and mother.591, 592

*Circumcision (khetana)*

Circumcision is an Islamic custom for boys, who typically undergo the process before age 6. On the day of the event, the family has a celebratory meal with relatives and friends, and the boy receives presents from the guests. Normally circumcisions occur at home and are conducted by a barber.593, 594 Moroccan females are not circumcised, which differs from other Islamic cultures.595

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595 Fatima Sadiqi, *Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 60.
Naming Conventions

Moroccan family names pass down from the father, and personal names (first names) are chosen by the parents. When written, the family name appears first, followed by the personal name. Women do not take the family name of the man they marry; they always remain in the family of their father. It is fairly usual to address Moroccans, particularly men, by their family name or their personal name, especially because their personal name may be common.

Moroccans do not have complete freedom in choosing personal names. Names must be “Moroccan in nature” in order to be legal. In 2010, the nation determined that Berber names meet the legal requirement and that children may take Berber rather than Arabic names.

*Lalla* is the most common title for a woman. It may refer to royalty, similar to the term “Lady.” It may be used as a prefix to the family or personal name, or, like the English term “ma’am,” as a generic term of address for an older woman or a woman of acquaintance. Similar to “sir” or “mister,” *Sidi* is the general title for men. Like *Lalla*, it may be used out of respect or to address a man who is an acquaintance. The term *Moulay* is often used to refer to deceased sultans and saints and to some living holy men. (The phrase *Moulay Muhammad* is strictly reserved for the Prophet Muhammad.) The titles *Hajja* and *Hajj*, respectively, are used for women and men who have undertaken the pilgrimage to Mecca.

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Chapter 6 Assessment

1. Moroccans do not ask questions about a person’s family because the topic is considered too personal.
   False
   Because of its overarching importance, the family is the prime topic of conversation in everyday life.

2. Female circumcision is common in Morocco.
   False
   Circumcision is required for Muslim males, but female circumcision is rarely practiced in Morocco, which differs from other Muslim countries.

3. The new family law of Morocco maintains the husband’s control of the household.
   False
   The new law stipulates that the husband and wife share responsibility and control over the household.

4. The legal age for marriage is 18.
   True
   Prior to 2003, the minimum age for females to marry was 15.

5. Arranged marriages negotiated by participating families are more common in urban areas.
   False
   In rural areas, the Western practice of dating—involving unmonitored and independent courtship—is uncommon.
FINAL ASSESSMENT

1. Berber dynasties controlled Morocco after the introduction of Islam.
   True / False

2. The United States recognizes Western Sahara as a sovereign nation.
   True / False

3. Droughts have affected Morocco’s largest economic sector.
   True / False

4. The vast majority of the Moroccan population is categorized as Sahrawi.
   True / False

5. Imazighen refers to Morocco’s small Jewish population.
   True / False

6. Marabouts are believed to possess special spiritual powers.
   True / False

7. Sunni Islam is the most common form of Islam practiced in Morocco.
   True / False

8. Morocco is considered a leader in women’s rights in the Muslim world.
   True / False

9. Shop hours and workdays may be shorter during the month of Ramadan.
   True / False

10. Proper dress for public outings involves covering the arms and legs regardless of the heat.
    True / False

11. It may be appropriate in some instances to shake a Moroccan woman’s hand.
    True / False

12. Hishma is the concept of a positive self-image.
    True / False

13. Rules of social interaction are similar in private and public places.
    True / False

14. Moroccans share their lunchtime meal with family and friends.
    True / False
15. Wearing the hijab, or headscarf, is mandatory in Morocco.
   True / False

16. As a group, urban youths have been hit hard by unemployment.
   True / False

17. The enrollment rate for secondary school is lower than the rate for primary school.
   True / False

18. The euro is the easiest currency to exchange for dirhams.
   True / False

19. Petit taxis have fixed rates similar to grand taxis.
   True / False

20. Travelers to Morocco receive the same standard of care delivered in Western hospitals.
   True / False

21. A lack of education has fueled the rural-to-urban migration.
   True / False

22. Police checkpoints are limited to urban areas.
   True / False

23. There may be little to no potable water in rural areas.
   True / False

24. When the male head of household migrates for work, he is still the authority in the home.
   True / False

25. Cars are required to go through a checkpoint before crossing the Algerian border.
   True / False

26. The groom pays a dowry, which is used to set up the household.
   True / False

27. According to the 2004 family code, both husband and wife must consent to a divorce.
   True / False

28. Following a divorce, the children all live with their father.
   True / False
29. Moroccan names are written differently from American names, with the family name first, followed by the personal name.
   True / False

30. Women share a family name with their husband and children.
   True / False
FURTHER RESOURCES

Books and Articles


Videos
