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DINING IN

MOROCCO



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DINING IN MOROCCO

THE FLAVOURS & AROMAS OF MOROCCO

Morocco is one of the most culturally diverse nations on the planet.

Originally home of the Berbers, Arabian settlers formed much of the early characteristics of all we now know and see. But its proximity to Europe drew Roman, Spanish, French and Jewish influences from around the Mediterranean Sea.

This melting pot has created distinctive flavors - both culturally and culinarily - with numerous recognizable influences amalgamating into something that is unarguably Moroccan.

Morocco was a primary nexus of the early spice routes, traders gathering on its northern shores to buy, sell and export spices to Europe. Where once these precious commodities were brought to Morocco from around the world, many are now grown there and there are few greater pleasures than wandering the souks of Marrakech amongst the vibrant mounds of ground cumin, cinnamon, paprika and nutmeg.

Classic Moroccan cuisine stems from the simple meals of goat farmers, slow-cooked meats mixed with pulses and spices and served on rice or couscous, but Morocco has firmly embraced a more refined, globally influenced culinary scene.

QUICK FACTS:

- Cumin, cinnamon, ginger, saffron, paprika and pepper are fundamental flavors of Moroccan cuisine
- Meals are very much a communal affair & extended families frequently come together to share them
- Ras El Hanout is the quintessential flavor of Morocco, combining eight spices for a rich, sweet, smoky blend with a kick
- Watch out for harissa! Spices are mixed with olive oil to form a flavorful but fiery paste
- With a prominent Muslim population, pork is rarely found on the menu, but you will often find sheep and goat
- Superb restaurants can be found, but to truly taste the country, the marketplaces are where to find the best food.

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MOROCCO MARKETS & SOUKS

THE FLAVORS & AROMAS OF MOROCCO

The souks and marketplaces of Morocco are iconic.

The very thought of Marrakech conjures images of winding alleyways bursting with color, the fragrance of exotic spices upon the gentle breeze, and scents of unknown dishes tantalizing us and piquing our appetites.

Beneath the technicolor awnings of market stalls one can find expertly-crafted jewellery, stained-glass lampshades, hand-woven rugs and the exotic offerings of curious and unfamiliar bazaars.

Amongst the furnishings and textiles, fresh dates, buckets brimming with marinated olives and the stunning conical mounds of cumin, cinnamon, paprika and anise beguile the senses. It is a browser's banquet, with all manner of sweet and savory delights to be found; small tasters offered with radiant smiles, and abundant meals shared at streetside tables.

Jemaa el-Fnaa is the epitome of the culinary souks of Marrakech. By day, an empty square lies all but unused. But as the golden light of evening descends, the aromas arise, a small village of stalls appears, and a gamut of foods, flavors and fare can be sampled. If the heart of a nation is in its food, Jemaa el-Fnaa is its pulse.

QUICK FACTS:

- Locals tend to dine out more than eat at home, & their daily meals can be found in the souks & market laneways
- Souks are a wonderful way to sample an immense variety of foods in one place
- Souks offer a huge variety of products, with many of the alleyways divided or themed. An expert guide will take you to the best area to find what you are searching for.
- You can very easily lose several hours wandering the fascinating stalls, but food is never far away, & you will often be offered tasters & samples
- Many locals also eat at Jemaa el-Fnaa. It is one of the best places to find a huge diversity of authentic Moroccan fare, as well as foods from Italy, France, Spain & beyond

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LE SELMAN - Selman Marrakech

One of several restaurants within the Selman Marrakech hotel, Le Selman offers predominantly European-style fine dining in its sumptuous, atmospheric interior. Yet despite this more contemporary influence, Le Selman doesn't entirely deny the resonant flavors of local ingredients to add a little Moroccan *je ne sais quoi* to each dish.

QUATTRO - Four Seasons Resort

Another 'in-house' restaurant, Quattro proves itself more than worthy of the superb Four Seasons reputation. Serving breakfast and lunch, Quattro presents an international collection of dishes, whilst the warm, golden Marrakech evening brings Southern Italian influence to the menu, ingredients combined in perfect harmony for a sensory explosion of flavors and textures.

LA TABLE DE LA SULTANA - La Sultana Hotel

Despite falling resolutely within the fine dining realm, La Table de la Sultana brings a more authentically Moroccan aspect to its dishes with distinctive French undertones. Embodying a 'terroir cuisine' philosophy, all ingredients are harvested locally and sustainably, from soil and sea, with saffron, cumin and many of Morocco's most iconic aromas infusing the more classically French menu.

L'Ô À LA BOUCHE

L'ô à la Bouche roughly translates as the 'oh' of the mouth - the gasp of astonishment - and the wondrous, modernized traditional French servings of chef Hervé Paulus produce precisely that. Chef Paulus take a single ingredient and intelligently augments its flavor profile, pairing scallops with a citrus pepper, seared tuna on a bed of pomelo and numerous other creative combinations.

BÔ ZIN

In one of the world's most truly unique collaborations, Bô Zin brings Asia to Morocco. A wide selection of dim sum shares the menu with more contemporary dishes - beef tenderloin, lamb confit and seafood dishes. However, the flavors of Asia inject a liveliness to make each dish at once reminiscent and exquisitely novel.

PALAIS DAR SOUKKAR

For a more dynamic dining experience, Palais dar Soukkar brings cabaret to fine dining. The dramatic entrance entices you inwards, the food tantalizes the tastebuds and the nightly performances astound and amaze. Set-price menus provide a wide selection of across three courses. Palais dar Soukkar is an indulgence of all the senses.



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THE GRAND CAFE DE LA POSTE

The charming, classically French interior complements the authentic Franco-Moroccan menu. Chef Philippe Duranton creates a menu of powerful and delicious dishes that enhance traditionally French dishes while utilizing local flavors and ingredients. He strives to work with the best local gardeners, butchers and grocers to offer fresh seasonal produce, prepared with perfection.

LA TRATTORIA DI GIANCARLO

La Trattoria brings authentic Italian to the exotic streets of Morocco. Hand-prepared pastas and locally-caught seafood evoke restaurants of the Amalfi Coast. Bursting in flavor, each dish is exquisitely presented in this striking Art Deco-inspired venue with a dining courtyard and ornamental pool at its heart. Exclusive and intimate, its style instills both fine dining and Italian bistro.

DAR ZELLIJ

Located within an impeccably-restored 17th century riad, Dar Zellij combines the many dimensions that have coalesced to make Morocco all it is today. Traditional dishes are given their own modern-day restoration, honoring the past but reinterpreting for a contemporary clientele. Dar Zellij was named one of the world's best restaurants by Laliste.com.

COMPTOIR DARNA

Comptoir Darna offers the truly authentic flavors of Marrakech in a chic and intimate setting. Taking the traditional Berber tagine and reinventing it for the modern palate across numerous interpretations, Comptoir enhances centuries of culinary tradition for something that is at once classic and innovative.

ROYAL MANSOUR

The hotel of Royal Mansour incorporates four wonderfully different restaurants that will entice you to return meal after meal, day after day.

La Table brings a distinctly Parisian air to Marrakech, Baroque chandeliers and Middle Eastern cornices somehow finding symbiosis. Wonderfully indulgent dishes excite the inner child in us all.

La Grande Table Marocaine is Royal Mansour's signature fine dining Moroccan restaurant, elegant opulent and sharing a new interpretation of Moroccan cuisine.

Sesamo is the newest addition to the collection, heralded as the best in contemporary Italian cuisine to be found in Morocco.

Lastly, *Restaurant Le Jardin* is a multi-cultural al fresco collaboration, with sushi, tapas, local seafood and modern plates in a wonderfully appealing diversity of dishes.

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GAYZA- Riad Fès

Drawing on the traditional Fassi cuisine, Gayza is very much a contemporary fine dining restaurant with hints of Morocco in every mouthful. An elegant and refined menu of international inspiration has all the finesse of a chic western establishment yet with captivating wafts of spice and scent that transport you to the dunes of the Sahara.

L'AMANDIER - Palais Faraj

Hotel restaurant L'Amandier eloquently explains, 'Fassi cuisine is a genuine melting pot. Arabs, Jews, Berbers, Moors and French have all left their culinary fingerprint in what is considered to be the quintessential Moroccan food'. This is expertly presented with a modern twist on the rooftop terrace of Palais Faraj, with sweeping panoramic views of Fès providing a striking visual appetizer.

LA MAISON BLEUE

The El Abbadi family present recipes passed from generation to generation over the centuries for one of the most authentically Moroccan dining experiences available. Despite this rich and respected heritage, chefs offer the unapologetically traditional dishes with a fine dining-inspired presentation, classical yet flawlessly refined.

NUR

Nestled amongst the fascinating alleyways of Fès, Nur is a flash of clean white lines and chic design with influences from the Byzantine times creating a continual reminiscence of heredity. Proudly Moroccan head chef Najat Kaanache manifests the multicultural meandering pathway through history that has brought Morocco into the modern era, a marriage of classical dishes and the fine artistry of today's premier restaurants. Chef Najat also offers private cooking classes for those wishing for an immersive, interactive culinary experience.

RESTAURANT MB

With its subdued, semi-industrial interior Restaurant Mb immediately sets itself apart from the conventional. Head chef Thierry Vaissière very distinctly integrates French, Italian and Moroccan nuances, bold preparation offset by refined presentation. The rough-hewn rock walls coupled with the starkly minimalist furnishings and towering ceiling provide an eloquent metaphor for the entire dining experience.



DINING IN CASABLANCA

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SENS

The name alone hints at the experience to be enjoyed at Sens. From the 27th floor of Casablanca's Kenzi Tower, the panoramic views are simply breathtaking. Faultless service conveys your exquisite dishes, each a vibrant masterpiece of such caliber that it might at least equal the spectacular scenery beyond the expansive windows. The menu draws from all corners of the Mediterranean coast, with a touch of France, Italy and Morocco itself, playing influence for the talented chefs.

LE CABESTAN

Le Cabestan has been serving the finest cuisine with spectacular oceanic views since 1926, yet despite this extended tenure on Casablanca's culinary scene, it is very much a restaurant *du jour*. Offerings span the global menu, from pizzas and decadent burgers to quinoa-crusting salmon and Argentinian wood-fired sirloin.

LILY'S

Lily's is an absolute indulgence of the senses. The open frontage seems to allow the ocean to wash through the three large dining spaces, the minimalist design celebrating the sights, sounds and smells of the Atlantic. The menu includes an exploration of Asia, with Vietnam, Japan, China and Korea all represented, and diligently reinterpreted by Michelin Star-awarded chefs.

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RICK'S CAFÉ

It seems only appropriate when visiting Casablanca to attend the restaurant immortalized in the titular 1942 film. The iconically Art Deco interior, complete with grand piano awaiting its Sam, is complemented by a chic and refined menu worthy of Bergman and Bogart. Fresh oysters, fig and goat cheese salads, locally sourced seafood and a plethora of aperitifs complete this wonderful tribute to the timeless movie.

BASMANE

Spanning the gamut of sweet and savory, sugar and spice, Basmane creates genuinely authentic Moroccan dishes, refined for a more modern fine dining experience. You can expect to find tagines, pastillas, plenty of couscous and a generous side of harissa, but presentation comes with a delicacy and reservedness befitting a more elite establishment. Traditionally, meat, be that lamb and veal, poultry or seafood, features heavily in Moroccan foods, and Basmane is not recommended to plant-based diners.

BLEU - Four Seasons

The restaurant of Casablanca's Four Seasons hotel, Bleu is fine dining *par excellence*. The Mediterranean-inspired menu is as inventive and artistic as it is mouthwateringly delicious, making Bleu a simply unmissable destination for any passionate gastronomist.