

EL FENN HOT LIST



2025



WELCOME TO THE HOT LIST

Style, modernity and tradition combine in a dazzling mix in Marrakech. Want to make the most of it all? Here's our pick of the best places, spaces and experiences for 2025 covering food, drink, art and everything in between.

EXPLORE THE CONTEMPORARY FOOD SCENE

New restaurants are opening all the time in Marrakech but these are the ones we're loving right now. The interiors at **Mizaan** are a fabulous blend of Modern aesthetic with traditional materials. And the food is just as good. It's Middle Eastern meets Moroccan so think sharing plates of roast chicken labneh or kefta with a kick of chilli. Make sure to try and find the hidden speakeasy bar.

Villa Aaron is the newest opening by the team behind the ever popular Kabana. Housed in a historic riad in the Kasbah area of the medina, it's the perfect place to go for lunch after visiting the Saadi Tombs, El Badi Palace or Le MAP museum. The interiors are a stunning blend of whimsical meets Morocco.

The menu at **Farmers** in Gueliz is all about 'farm to fork' and their produce is sourced from Sanctuary Slimane, a permaculture farm just outside the city. Think local sourcing, pesticide-free ingredients and dishes including beef tartare with bone marrow butter or sea bream with harissa salsa and chermoula salsa verde.



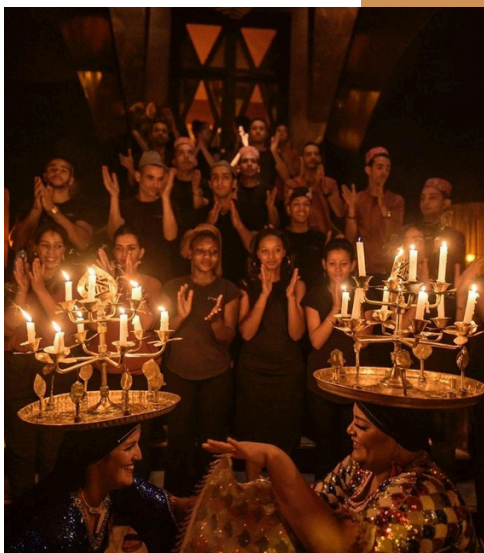
ENJOY A CLASSIC MOROCCAN MEAL



The all-female team at **Sahbi Sahbi** serves up traditional food against a stunning backdrop designed by the celebrated team of architects and designers at Studio KO. The menu covers all the core beats of Moroccan food and the interior puts a contemporary - and uber stylish spin - on all the key artisanal crafts, including tile work, plaster and wood.



La Trattoria has been in business for 50 years and rightfully earned its place as a grande dame of the ever changing Marrakech restaurant scene. The food might be Italian but it's still a classic night out because this restaurant was designed by Bill Willis - a legendary interior designer and friend of Yves Saint Laurent. Sit by the pool underneath a cascade of Moroccan lamps and feel the history of 60s and 70s Marrakech style - when everyone from the Rolling Stones to the Gettys spent time in the city - all around you.



If you want food, dancing, music, and a dazzling show of belly as well as candle dancers, then **Le Comptoir** is the original fun night out. It's lively, upbeat and always memorable. After dinner you can head upstairs where a DJ plays into the early hours.

OR EAT SOME TRADITIONAL STREET FOOD

Chez Lamine Hadj Mustapha is a Marrakech institution. Whole lambs are slow roasted for several hours in underground ovens and slices are served with cumin, salt and bread. It's simple, local and memorable. The tiny cafe is always packed with locals so either arrive early to get a seat or wander the nearby olive and spice stalls while you wait for a table.



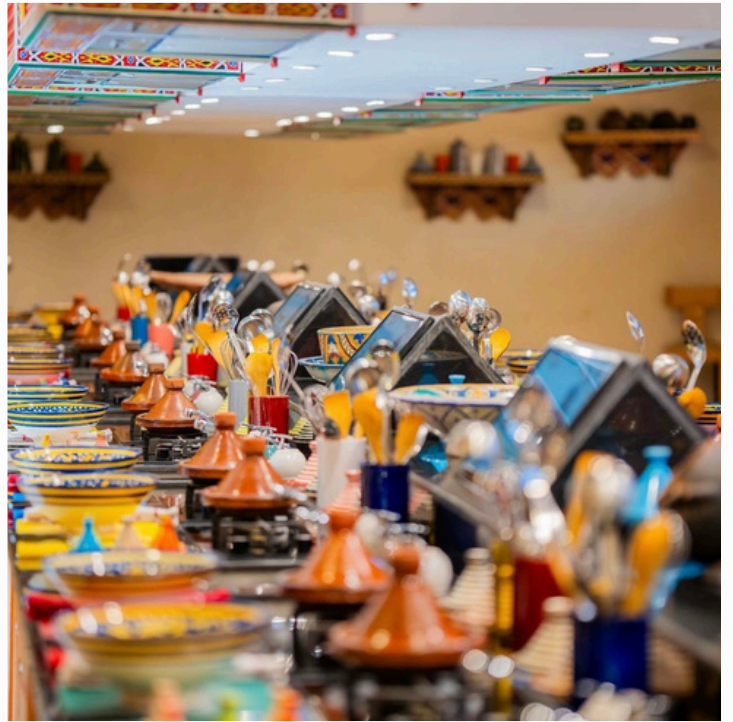


GET CULTURAL

If accessories are your thing, as well as the economic, social and cultural significance of how humans have chosen to adorn themselves over millennia, then head to **Le MAP**. The museum showcases almost 3000 pieces of jewellery, clothing and textiles collected by Marlene and Paolo Ponce-Gallone during decades of travel and research in more than 50 countries. The building itself is also beautiful - spanning three floors and inspired by Ben Youssef Medersa. There's also a gorgeous rooftop garden.

Or if you're into food, the **Moroccan Culinary Arts Museum** is well worth a visit. The exhibitions are small but perfectly formed and will walk you through the key constituents of Moroccan cuisine from couscous and pastillas to herbs and spices. There's also an amazing cooking school which holds daily classes, a cafe and roof terrace decorated in dazzling zellige plus a shop selling local food products.

An expert from the Louvre assisted in the restoration of the sixteenth-century building that's now home to the **Museum of Music**. And after painstakingly removing modern plaster and additions, the dazzling bones of the original house were revealed. It's home to exhibits exploring Morocco's rich musical history and its vivid mix of Berber, Islamic, African and Andalusian traditions. There are also musical evenings and traditional tea ceremonies.



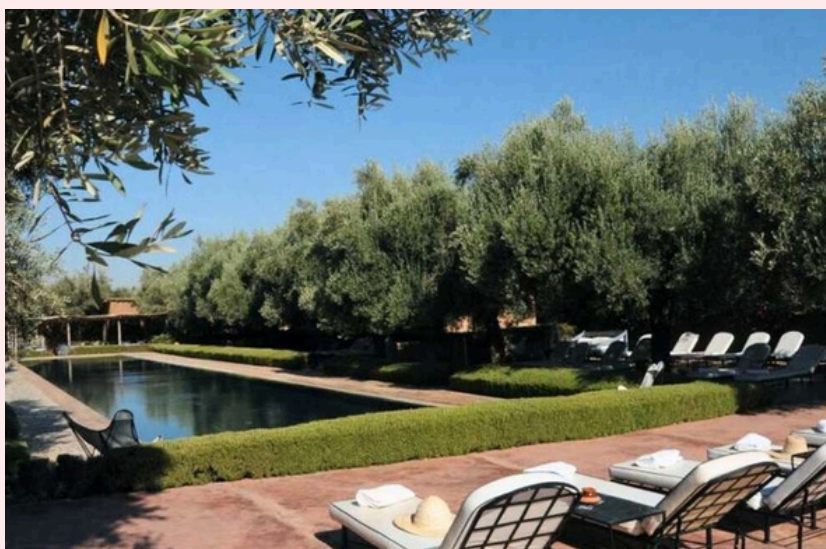


RELAX BY A POOL

Balearic style meets Moroccan chic at **Farasha Farmhouse** - a countryside retreat where rustic is served with a side of serious chic. Fred and Rosena Farmoy, whose address book is stuffed with the best names, have created a deeply peaceful property in the countryside about half an hour from the city. Relax by Farasha's stunning 50 metre pool before lunch on the beautiful terrace. The food is relaxed but expertly curated by one of the city's hottest young chefs. Also keep an eye on their Instagram for the rolling pop ups of DJs, sound healers and thought leaders.



Or head to the **Beldi Country Club**, the OG of Marrakshi pool life where the local crowd have long congregated on the weekends. Lunch is served in the rustic restaurant, the pool is surrounded by sun loungers shaded by ancient olive trees and there's also a great spa. Plus, beautiful gardens and a collection of small stores selling ceramics, pottery, rugs and glass.



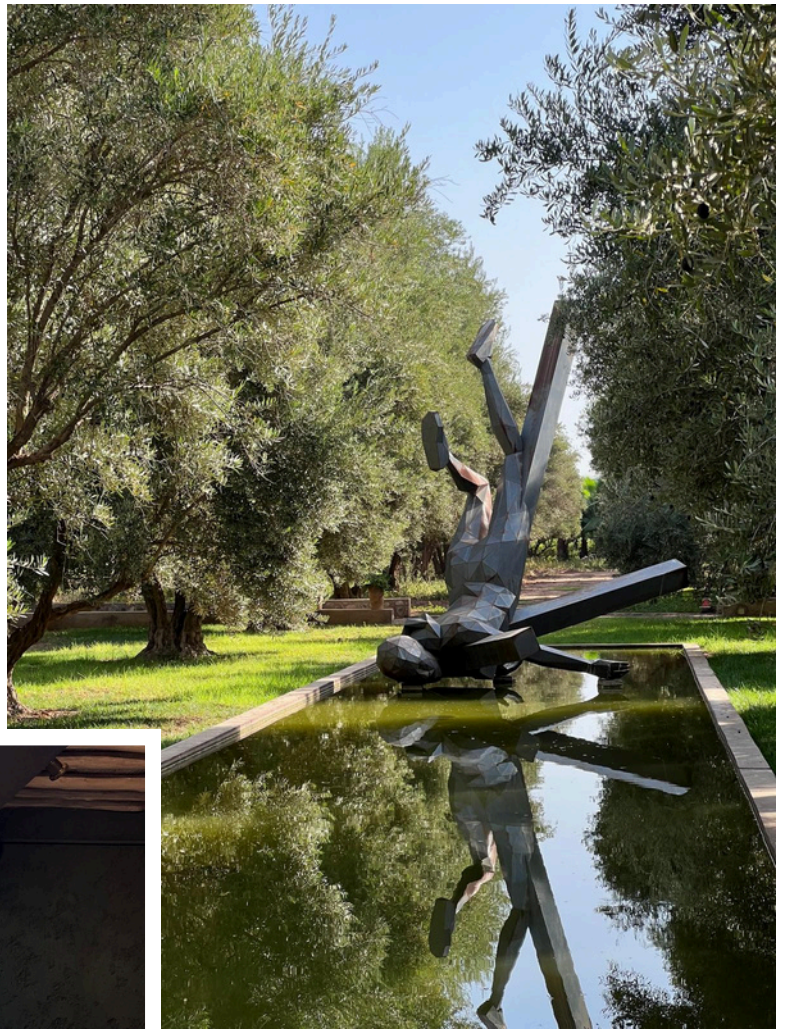


GET INSPIRED BY ART

Drive through the arid countryside outside Marrakech and through the gates of **Montresso Art Foundation** to find an oasis of creativity. Since 2009, Montresso has hosted around 50 artists from all over the world each year for residencies in their nine ateliers - and created a hub of dynamic artistic exchange. Working with local master craftsmen specialising in wood, resin and metal, the artists create everything from art and photography to huge sculptures. A permanent collection of work is scattered around the 12-hectare property which also has beautiful gardens plus there are rolling temporary exhibitions. You can discover it all on a private visit. It's a must-see.

If you're in the medina then head to **DaDa** where you'll find a gallery showcasing contemporary art, a bar and rooftop restaurant plus the young, creative Marrakshi crowd.

Our other art pick is in the industrial quarter of Sidi Ghanem which is packed with some of the city's most exciting makers producing everything from rugs and pottery, to lighting and textiles. Take a break from shopping to visit the **MCC Gallery** whose roster includes some of the brightest and best contemporary artists from Morocco and its diaspora.



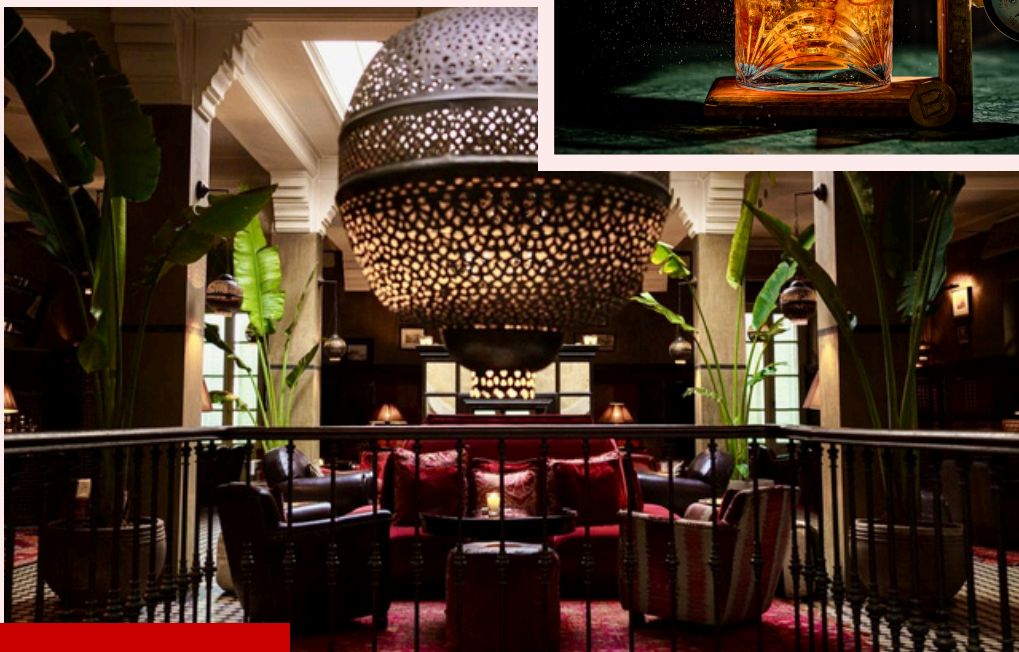
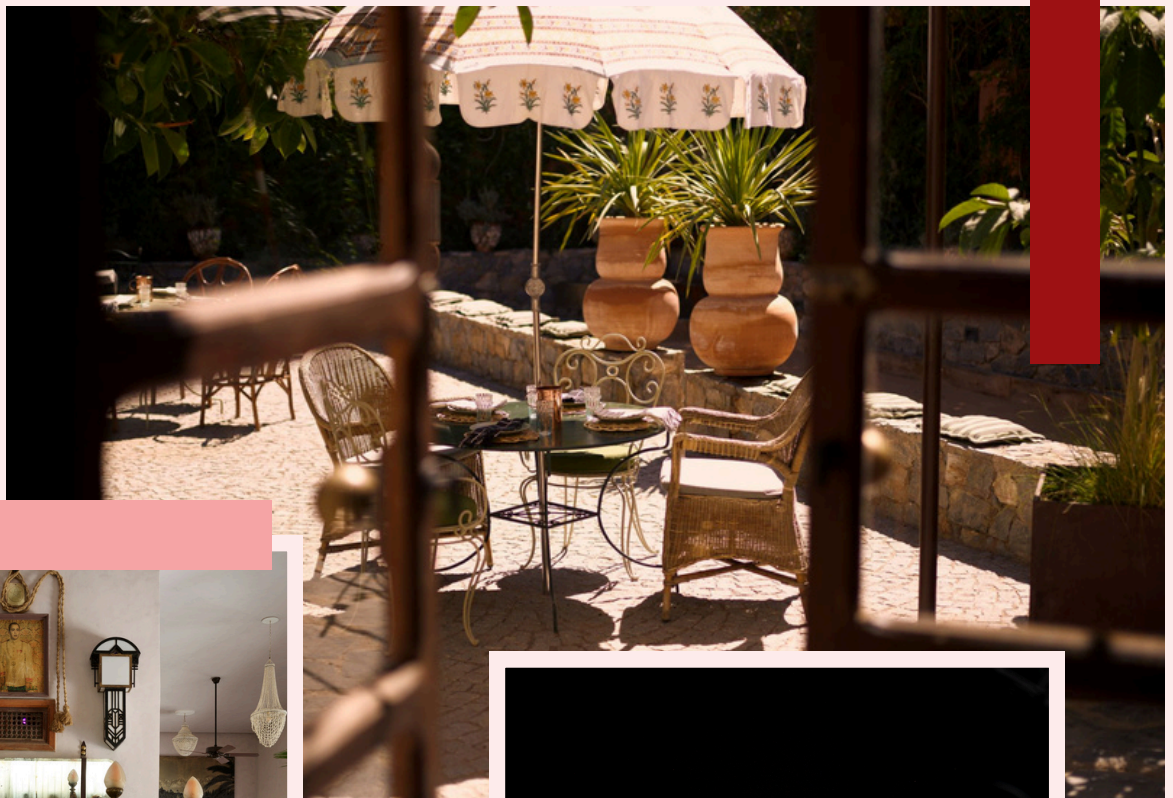
ENJOY A COCKTAIL... OR TWO

You'll find some of the city's best contemporary restaurants in Gueliz but there are some cool cocktail spots too. Drop in for a drink in the garden at **Petanque Social Club** which is perfect for the warmer months. There's also a stylish inside bar.

An aperitif on the terrace at **Cafe de la Poste** is a classic but our pick for winter is the upstairs bar where open fires and candles create the ultimate cosy atmosphere.

Or head down into the basement at **Barometre** for showstoppingly inventive cocktails created by the Hadni brothers. Alongside the classics, there's a menu of cocktails-meets-works-of-art served in evermore ingenious ways. Our favourite? The 'Marrakech Market'. A fusion of orange and cinnamon whisky with saffron syrup and Cointreau served in a smoked clay pot with a side of dates.





SUPPORT A SOCIAL PROJECT

There are also some wonderful ways to give back to the local community while you're in Marrakech. Two of our favourites are the **Amal Centre** in Gueliz - a gorgeous garden restaurant which serves up truly authentic Moroccan food. It's made by a team of women chefs who each year train around 50 vulnerable women, equipping them with invaluable skills they then use to work in the food industry. Friday lunchtime couscous is a highlight.

Just down the road from El Fenn, **Pikala** is a social project that runs great bike tours of the medina with local guides who'll take you to parts of their city that many other tourists never reach. Profits are put back into the community via cycling training, road safety initiatives and education.



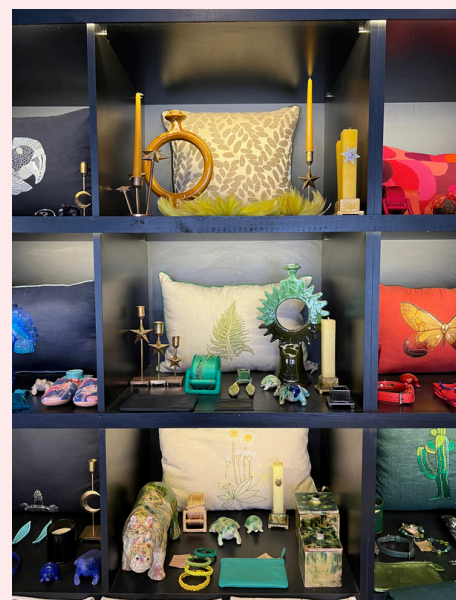


SHOP THE BEST CONCEPT STORES

Marrakech is packed with great shops but who doesn't love a concept store? You can shop everything from fashion and fragrance in a few of our favourites.

El Fenn's Boutique is packed with pieces you won't find anywhere else because our creative team works with Marrakech's best makers to create one off lines. We're all about blending the timeless rhythms of traditional crafts, textiles and materials with a modern aesthetic. Our stock is constantly being updated but you'll always find a carefully curated edit of fashion, accessories and homeware.

Elsewhere in the medina, **Different** is a sprawling store packed with men's and women's fashion, as well as accessories and fragrance, with a focus on pattern and colour. Walk through the door into the colour-drenched world of **Stella Cadente** and you'll find a riad with each room styled with homeware and fashion.



IMMERSE YOURSELF IN NATURE



If you love the outdoors then you'll love the Atlas Mountains. The scenery is dramatic, the air fresh and the views to die for. Go on a hike with a local guide, discover the beautiful natural habitats of Morocco and also learn more about the communities who live in the mountains. Our Atlas Discovery tour covers all this. And more.

Or if you want a more laidback immersion in the outdoors, head to the **Anima Gardens**. Created by artist Andre Heller, you'll find pieces of his work installed in the gorgeous gardens that are filled with plants, ponds and gazebos. They're playful, colour-soaked and there's also a small cafe. Oh. And a museum with works by Picasso, Rodin and Keith Haring.



THE PRACTICALITIES



STAYING AT EL FENN

El Fenn is a unique hotel in a unique city. Housed in 12 interconnected historic riads, we have 41 stunning rooms and suites plus a 1,300 sq metre rooftop, three pools, a spa and shop. Our signature look is a blend of local craft seen through a modern lens. Hundreds of artisans have worked on the buildings over the past 20 years to hand make all the interiors - from intricate tile work and carved cedar wood, to tadelakt lime plaster walls and stitched leather floors. We've been profiled everywhere from Vogue to Architectural Design and Conde Nast has also named us on their prestigious annual Gold List four times.



PLAN YOUR TRIP

Marrakech is connected by air to the whole of Europe, as well as 5-hour direct flights from New York. Alternatively, you can fly into Casablanca which is just two hours away by car.

El Fenn itself is all about location, location, location. We're just a 10-minute drive from Marrakech airport on the edge of the medina which means you're a few minutes' walk from the historic centre but can also hop into a taxi to quickly reach the bars, restaurants and shops found in new town areas including Gueliz, Hivernage and the Palmeraie.

INSIDE THE MEDINA

Marrakech medina is the ancient walled area of the city that's home to a network of cobblestone streets, ancient buildings and historic sites. It's protected by UNESCO and the beating heart is Djemaa el Fna - a huge square where traders, poets and everyone in between have congregated for millennia.

Inside the medina, you'll also find artisans at work and a souk filled with traders selling traditional products. There's just one golden rule: prepare to get a bit lost, soak up the sights and remember that all roads lead back to Djemaa el Fna so you'll pop out into the main square eventually.

The braver you are, the most you'll make of the medina. Get off the main 'streets' running through the souk and dive into the more hidden areas where you'll find artisans selling more unusual things. You'll also get a better sense of the souk as a living/working place because you'll see the craftsmen working, lunching, chatting and going to pray. And when it comes to paying, don't get too bogged down in hammering down prices. Just pay what you feel comfortable with.



HIRING A GUIDE

We've worked with our team of wonderful guides for 20 years at El Fenn and always recommend hiring one for at least half a day to make the most of the souks because they're about more than shopping. The history, the culture - and the hidden spots - are all fascinating too. You'll see ovens where bread is still baked for local residents each day, historic hammams and fountains dedicated to saints. Our guiding team is headed by our treasured friend Mustapha Chouquir. Along with his team, he's shared his precious city with thousands of El Fenn guests over the years.

TRAVELLING SOLO

We often get asked if travelling alone in Marrakech is safe and the simple answer is you're as safe here as you are anywhere. For anyone who's not an experienced traveller though, coming alone to North Africa alone might feel daunting. We get it. It's a world away from the cities many of you will be familiar with.

So among our tips for travelling alone to Marrakech are:

- Own the room - Nothing will make you stand out more than walking uncertainly down a street, phone in hand, looking lost. Walk with intention, be your most fabulous travelling self - and repel unwanted attention with your purposeful stride.
- Stay central - Check the location of where you're staying in the medina carefully because the souk gets pretty deserted once it closes and you don't want to be anywhere that involves a long walk home alone along quiet streets. El Fenn is perfectly positioned just five minutes walk from the main square so it's an easy walk back after a night out in the medina - and you can get a taxi right to our door from other areas.
- Don't be afraid to be 'rude' - If you do get approached by someone, the best approach is to not overly engage. You're not on holiday to win a politeness contest. If you don't feel comfortable it's okay to ignore a stranger.



WEATHER & WHAT TO WEAR

The peak times to visit are spring and autumn when the temperatures are mid 20s to early 30s. But winter is also one of our favourite 'secret' times of year. You might not necessarily be sunbathing in January but it's warm enough to eat lunch in a t-shirt, the air is crisp and the sun golden. Winter trips are the perfect Vitamin D boost during the darkest months elsewhere. Set all that sunshine against a view of the snow-capped Atlas Mountains and it's a stunning time of year.

During spring and autumn, you'll only need a light cover up for the evening. And summer evenings are warm. The key if you're visiting anytime from late October to early April is that Marrakech is known as 'a cold city with a hot sun' which means it can get cold at night – and also if you're in the shade. Think layers. A warm coat and scarf are useful during winter. You won't need them all day but prepare to add and subtract when you're in the shade or after sunset.

Marrakech is a cosmopolitan city but the medina is certainly more traditional and we believe it's important to respect that. We'd advise women to cover shoulders and knees - particularly during the holy month of Ramadan. But if you're headed to Gueliz, Hivernage or the Palmeraie, crack out the heels and spaghetti straps if that's your thing.



HOW TO GET AROUND

Cars aren't allowed in the medina so get your sneakers on and prepare to walk. Nowhere is too far away though and not much more than about a 15-minute walk so it never takes too long. If you want to explore other areas of the city, we can arrange an El Fenn driver to take you. Or you can pick up one of the city's official yellow taxis. Each one has a meter which should be put on. If not, don't get into an argument over pricing. Just have some small change ready and pay around 20-30MAD for a trip of about 15 minutes during the day and 80-100MAD at night.

That's way over what you'd pay on the meter so if the taxi driver isn't happy then don't get too involved.



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