



Five Affordable Destinations: Africa

MOROCCO

This North African kingdom has been conquered and re-conquered over the centuries. Today, it reflects a blend of ancient traditions and cultures together with its more recent French colonial ties. Both French and Arabic are spoken.

What To See and Do:

It would be easy to wander for days in the labyrinthine *medinas* at the heart of the three imperial capitals: Marrakech, Fes and Meknes. But beyond the ancient walls and gates of these fabled cities lie Berber villages and Islamic shrines, Roman ruins and beach resorts, and a chance to trek the rugged North African terrain on camel, donkey or foot.

Getting there:

Flights to Morocco on major U.S. and European airlines or on the national carrier Royal Air Maroc can easily start around \$800, although the Spanish airline Iberia has recently offered deals closer to \$500 via Madrid. Savvy travelers can cut a couple hundred dollars off the full fare by finding a cheap deal to Madrid, then catching a short flight to Morocco on EasyJet, a European discount carrier. EasyJet sells Madrid to Casablanca for 20 Euros each way, which adds up to a little over \$100 with all taxes and fees.

Getting around:

Moroccan hostel beds run in the range of \$15 to \$25 per night, while double rooms in moderate category hotels and guesthouses run from \$30 to \$70 in major centers like Marrakech. Basic restaurants serve local specialties such as couscous or tagine (a sort of roasted stew) for a couple of dollars. The national train network is efficient and inexpensive – the 10-hour trip from Tangiers to Marrakech costs around \$20. *Grands taxis* (a system of shared taxis) carry up to six passengers between towns. Prices are cheap enough so as to make it feasible to buy more than one place to ensure a more comfortable ride.