



Lagouira

SPAIN

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Fez



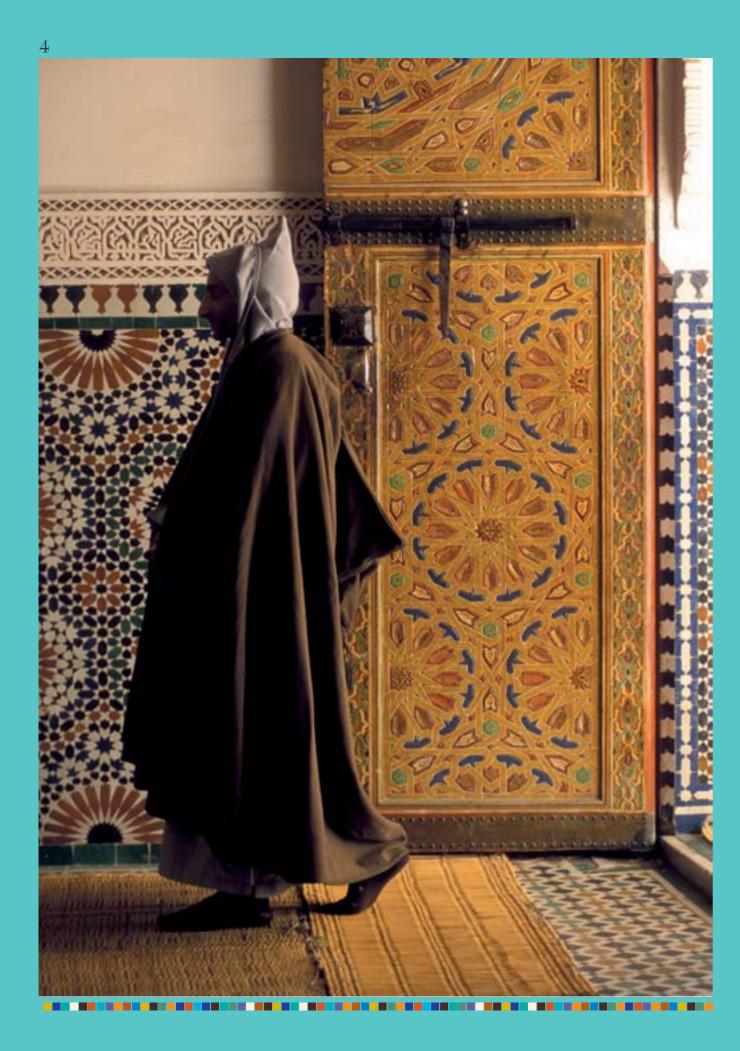








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Editorial



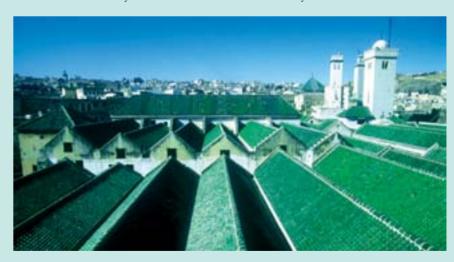
Balance and harmony the city's architecture is an inspiration to reverie and the quest for wisdom

Fascinating Fez

When the most imperial of all Morocco's cities welcomes its guests, it is to have them experience an altogether unique art of living for themselves. Fez is nothing less than a great open-air museum, on equal terms with Venice, Florence and Athens as an example of living world heritage. The subtle sumptuousness of its palaces, the richness of its museums, the solemn grandeur of its medersas, home to the greatest sages of the city's Golden Age, and the magnificent profusion of its mosques, each one raised in devout homage to the glory of God - for all those who love art and culture, these many wonders are an irresistible and ever open invitation to discovery.

The Kingdom's spiritual and cultural centre, city of a thousand and one faces, Fez has lost none of its splendour over the centuries, unwavering in its determination to preserve its traditions and keep its ancient stones vibrantly alive. Its medina, a listed UNESCO World Heritage site, is as unique and authentic as it was over 1200 years ago.

Fez, a melting pot of so many succeeding cultures, has absorbed the very best from each, inheriting Arab nobility, Andalusian sophistication, Jewish ingenuity, and Berber tenacity. Its glorious past, its marvellously preserved material and immaterial heritage, and the timeless aristocracy that lies at the centre of its being are all part and parcel of the fascination that the city holds for all those who visit it today.



The city that founded Morocco



A first overview of 1200 years of history...

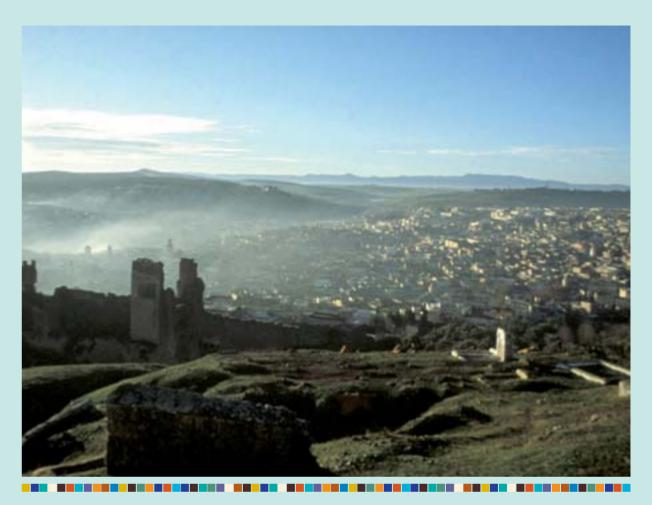
The town of "Madinat Fas" was founded by Idriss I in 789. Twenty years later, in 809, his successor, Idriss II, started work on making it his capital, building his royal palace there, along with his mosque, his kissaria (covered market), his canals and his city walls. The site was no haphazard choice, being carefully selected by the Idrissid dynasty with a canny eye on the future. Its geographic location on the fertile Saiss Plain, in the hollow of a valley at the foot of Mount Zalagh, made it an economic, political, and strategic crossroads, and was a decisive factor in the city's development and influence.

In 817-818, two successive waves of new arrivals began flowing into the city. 800 Andalusian families expelled from Cordoba by the Umayyads who settled in Fez and founded the Andalusian district, and, soon afterwards, around 2000 families from Kairouan fled there to escape Abassid persecution and created the Quaraouiyine district. Both groups were to have a major impact on the city's future. The newcomers brought their knowledge and know-how with them, along with long experience of city life. It was at their instigation that Fez was to become an important urban centre, whose way of life, so closely bound up with Oued Fez, a river watered by some sixty springs, is something of a rarity in the history of Moroccan cities.

The foundation of the Al Quaraouiyine university mosque in 857 marks the start of the city's Golden Age. The centuries that followed were years of unparalleled architectural creation - mosques, fondouks (caravanserais),



The Mellah district



Views of the medina from the surrounding hillsides have always inspired contemplation



The minarets of the mosque Quaraouiyine

luxurious residences, and renowned medersas (universities) sprang into being. The city saw itself become capital of a vast empire, and aspired to yet dizzier heights, with merchants, artists, scholars and students from throughout the world flocking to its gates. Its cultural and spiritual influence was such that it came to be referred to as the "Athens of Africa."

When the Merinids seized power in the 13th century, they had a new city, Fez el Jdid, built outside the existing walls to accommodate their palaces and the famous Mechouar (a huge square designed for ceremonial occasions and where the sovereign assembled the city dignitaries for consultation and advice). As capital of the empire, Fez became the refuge of choice for Andalusian Muslims and Jews, the latter being responsible for the creation of its Mellah (Jewish quarter). In the 16th century, under the Saadian dynasty, the city's fortunes fell into temporary decline, and it had to wait until 1666 to regain its lost prestige and rank of capital.

Over the course of its long and remarkable history, Fez has endowed itself with a rich and varied architectural and urban heritage, whose value has been deservedly recognised by UNESCO in its listing of the city's medina as a World Heritage site.

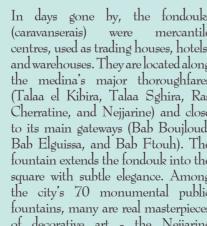
The treasures of Fez-el-Bali

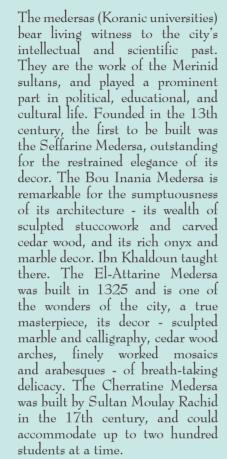


From its earliest days, the city's history has been bound up with the river upon whose banks it lies as is evidenced by its wealth of magnificent fountains

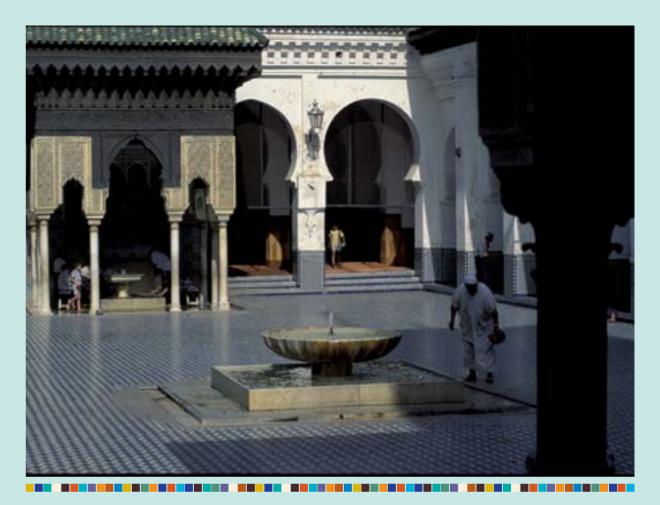
The whole of the old city, Fez -el-Bali, is nothing less than a great open-air museum, with countless masterpieces of architecture awaiting your discovery in its 9,400 narrow little streets. Among the 10,572 listed buildings of historical interest it contains, Fez boasts 185 mosques, numerous medersas, and a selection of truly magnificent palaces. There are so many sights that must simply not be left unseen.

Without a doubt, the most imposing of all its mosques is the Ouaraouivine. Founded in 859 by Fatima El Fihria and later enlarged, it is the very beating heart of the city. Its name derives from the district in which it stands, then inhabited by refugees from Kairouan. The Andalusian Mosque dates back to 860, and its great zellij-adorned gateway and carved wooden eaves are not to be missed out on. The Moulay Idriss Zaouia houses the tomb of the city's founder, Moulay Idriss II.

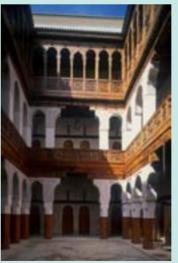




In days gone by, the fondouks (caravanserais) were mercantile centres, used as trading houses, hotels, and warehouses. They are located along the medina's major thoroughfares (Talaa el Kibira, Talaa Sghira, Ras Cherratine, and Nejjarine) and close to its main gateways (Bab Boujloud, Bab Elguissa, and Bab Ftouh). The fountain extends the fondouk into the square with subtle elegance. Among the city's 70 monumental public fountains, many are real masterpieces of decorative art - the Nejjarine



The left-hand pavilion and its ablution basin in the inner courtyard of the Qaraouiyine Mosque



Inside the Nejjarine fondouk

fountain, along with the one in Souk Hayek and the Qouas fountain are particularly fine examples.

The Batha Palace is now a Museum of Arts and Traditions, conserving rich collections of traditional Fassi artwork, including jewellery, embroidery, carpets, pottery, copperware, and wrought iron. The Nejjarine Museum of Wood Arts and Crafts is accommodated in a magnificently restored former fondouk, whose rooftop terrace affords splendid views of Fez and the surrounding hillsides.

The Quaraouiyine Library dates back to the 12th century. Since 1613, it has housed over 32,000 manuscripts, playing a major role in ensuring the city's influence as the Maghreb's scientific and intellectual capital. It has recently been restored, and continues to conserve its unique collections of rare documents - works from the pens of such great sages as Averroes and Ibn Khaldoun.

Fez, past and present



Fassi craftwork is remarkable for its extraordinary sophistication

The city's souks are part and parcel of Fassi life, and are organised corporately. Souk Attarine is without doubt one of the liveliest in the city, a market street with two monumental wooden doors at either end, which are closed in the evenings at the end of business. In bygone olden days, it specialised in the sale of traditional medicines, and according to Leon the African, its shops knew no rival anywhere in the world. Souk el-Henna has been selling cosmetic products for centuries (including rhassoul, soft soap, kohl, rosewater, and henna). And if it's a piece of unique Fassi embroidery you're after, look no further than Kissaria Serrajine, where an irresistible range of silks, brocades, braided trimmings, embroidered slippers and kaftans awaits your coming.

Souk Tillis is renowned for its carpets, the Nejjarine district for its cabinetwork (moucharabiehs, coffee tables, armchairs and, marquetry work), and the coppersmiths in Es-Seffarine square produce finely chased trays and teapots, along with countless other items of iron, copper and silver ware.

A morning visit to the tanners' district (the Chouwara tanneries) is an absolute must. The tanneries, made up of innumerable ditches filled to the brim with a dazzling variety of pigments, process skins for production of sheep, cow and goat leather in the traditional manner. Look down at proceedings from a neighbouring rooftop terrace - a giant artist's palette in all its colourful splendour!



A medina street



A panoramic view over the tanneries - nothing less than a giant artist's palette

Surprising Fez



The remains of the Merinid Tombs keep watch over the city

The Royal Palace

The most imposing of all Fez Jdid's monuments is undoubtedly the Royal Palace, which began construction in the 13th century. From Place des Alaouites, a vast esplanade created nearby in 1968, you can enjoy impressive views of the palace's delicately worked doorways.

The Mellah

The Jewish quarter was founded by the sultan at the end of the 16th century, to offer protection to the city's Jewish community. The Grand Rue des Merinides cuts across it, a bustling thoroughfare packed with shops of all kinds, selling, among other things, jewellery, household textiles, and a wide assortment of other fabrics. The houses in the Mellah are of different design to Muslim residences, with windows looking out on to the street and wooden or wrought-iron balconies. The 17th-century Ibn Danan synagogue is a masterpiece of Judeo-Moroccan architecture, and is well worth going out of your way to see.

The Fez Idid discovery tour

A very enjoyable four-wheel excursion, carrying you off to experience the city and its countless terraces and minarets in a whole new way, and taking in the North Borj, which today houses the city's Weaponry Museum, the Merinid Tombs, and the South Borj, an ideal departure point for discovery of the medina.

The remains of the Merinid Tombs stand on the slopes of Al Qolla, a hillside selected in the 14th century as the site of the royal necropolis. From 1361 to 1398, Abou El Hassan's successors and others of royal lineage were buried there. Now in ruins, little is left of the necropolis beyond the remains of three cupolas and a mosque, and a few sections of wall. But from the top of this gentle hillside overlooking the city, the views to be had of Fez el Bali and the Sebou Valley are an altogether spellbinding experience.



Bab Boujloud and its green and blue ceramics

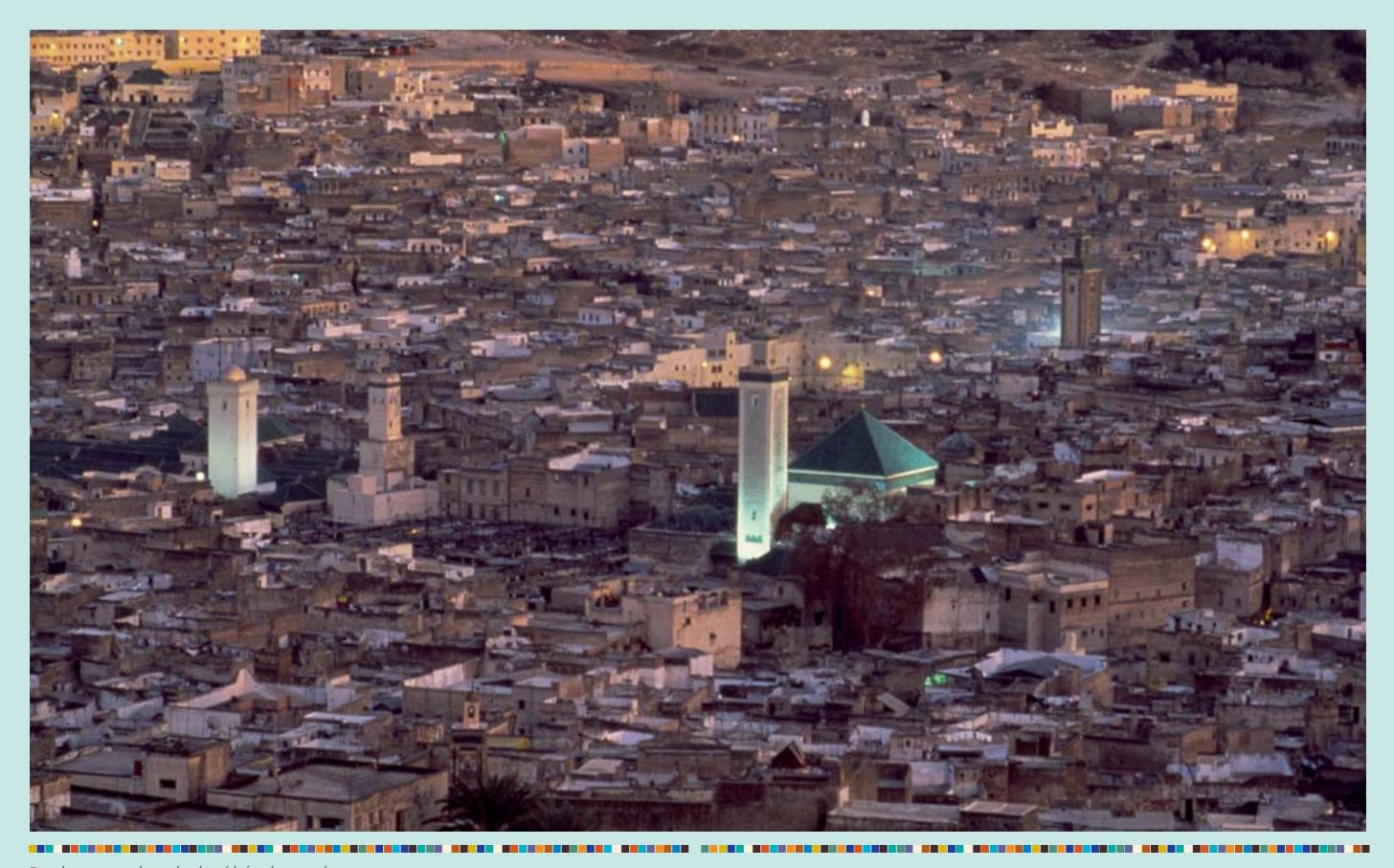


The exquisitely worked doors of the Royal Palace in Fez



Time has come to a standstill for the Magana Bou Inania clock

Across from the Bou Inania Medersa stand the venerable remains of a water clock (clepsydra) dating back to the 16th century, its mechanism sadly no longer intact. A number of studies have been carried out in recent years with a view to restoring it to active duty, the latest of which suggests that the clock may well have sounded hours of unequal length, based on the time elapsed between sunrise and sunset. For the moment, though, the Magana is still waiting for modern man to show as much ingenuity as his forebears evidently possessed 5 centuries ago, and finally gets it going once again.



Fez medina: a panorama that reveals nothing of the feverish activity within

Palaces from the Thousand and One Nights



The austere exterior walls of Fassi palaces give little indication of the magnificence awaiting discovery on the other side

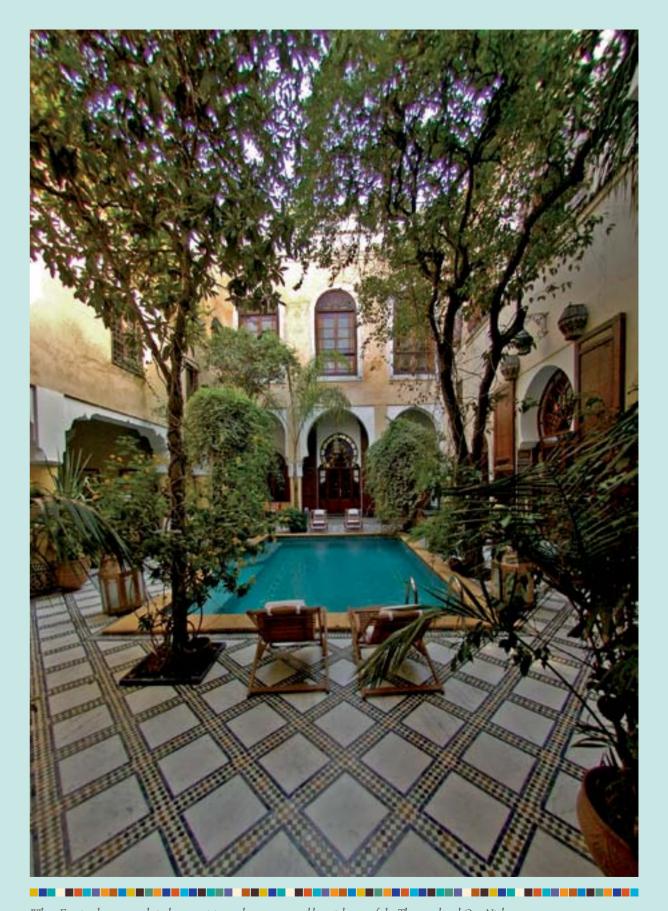
A thousand palaces lie hidden away in the labyrinthine streets of the medina, residences huddled side by side, their secrets jealously guarded by blind walls behind which daily life takes its course. Worlds of breath-taking wonder await those who cross their thresholds - fine stuccowork, carved cedar wood, zellij, stalactite-topped arches, balustrades, wrought-iron grills, and high double doors that are opened during the day to let in the sunlight and cool morning air. Each house has its fountain adorning the centre of the patio and its Andalusian or interior garden - in all, a magical combination of marble, water, and lush greenery. The Glaoui Palace, the Pasha of Marrakech's second home, comprises 1000 rooms, two gardens, 30 fountains, a Koranic school, a Moorish bath for men and another for women, an oven, an oil mill and a flour mill, stables, and a great central kitchen communicating with the

17 edifices of which it is composed. It is, without a doubt, the finest of all Fassi palaces, only rivalled by the Mokri Palace.

This latter is an integral part of Morocco's architectural heritage. Visitors are bedazzled by the exquisite cabinetwork and the delicacy of the wrought iron, sculpted by true master craftsmen. Painted and carved ceilings and cupolas vie for attention with baroque woodwork set with frosted Venetian glass windows and adorned with the colours of old Baghdad.

The Mnebhi Palace is one of the imperial city's more recently built monuments. Work started on its construction in the late 19th century, and it took the very finest Moroccan artists and craftsmen a full fifteen years to complete. The magnificent edifice that resulted is now a restaurant, and lovers of fine food can wine and dine in sumptuously decorated surroundings fit for prince.





When Fassi palaces open their doors to visitors, they enter a world straight out of the Thousand and One Nights

The Fassi art of living



The Fassi art of living relies on the culture of well-being

Life in Fez is a daily round of sophisticated pleasure - a fine roof over your head, subtle cuisine, elegant clothing, harmonious colours, age-old rituals of beauty, delicate perfumes, and bewitching music. The truest way to experience the Fassi art of living is to stay in one of the many riads in the heart of the medina, residences combining modern comfort with an authentic setting (architecture, patio and garden) and a warm welcome. Here, you will be immersed in Fassi tradition at its purest. The city also boasts a wide selection of top-ofthe-line hotels, including the world famous Palais Jamaï.

The culture of well-being

In Fez, with its many hammams, spas and thermal springs, the culture of well-being is apparent everywhere you look - the spellbinding world of the Oriental dream! Hammams and spas are an essential part of the service in the city's luxury riads and hotels, introducing you to rituals of body and beauty care passed down

from generation to generation since time immemorial.

Arousing the taste buds

With its roots in 13th-century Arabo-Andalusian cuisine, Fassi gastronomy combines sweet with savoury, treating fruits as vegetables and making cunning use of a whole range of spices and condiments, including cumin, coriander, pepper, capsicum, and cinnamon all ingredients to be found in that mouth-watering local delicacy, pigeon and almond pastilla. The knack required for creating the feather-light flaky pastry that covers the stuffing is a secret Fassi women pass down from mother to daughter. The real highpoint of Fassi cuisine, however, is Mrouzia, a dish originally prepared especially for Aïd-el-Adha (the sacrifice feast) and making use of a unique blend of spices known as Ras El Hanout (literally, "the top of the shop"), composed of between 35 and 45 different spices from Morocco, the Orient, and sub-Saharan Africa.





Subtle combination of sweet and savoury is one of the secrets underlying Fassi cuisine

Fassi craftwork: quality and true refinement



Fassi pottery is characterised by its intricate motifs and famous cobalt blue

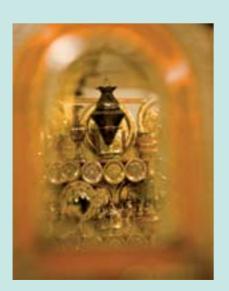
Master craftsmen with the golden touch

There are three basic principles that Fassi craftsmen never depart from: love of work well done, nobility of materials selected, and full mastery of required knowhow. It is a fascinating experience watching their hands at play in their tiny workshops and cramped courtyards, creating items of such extraordinary quality with such apparent ease - the fruit of many centuries of inherited experience.

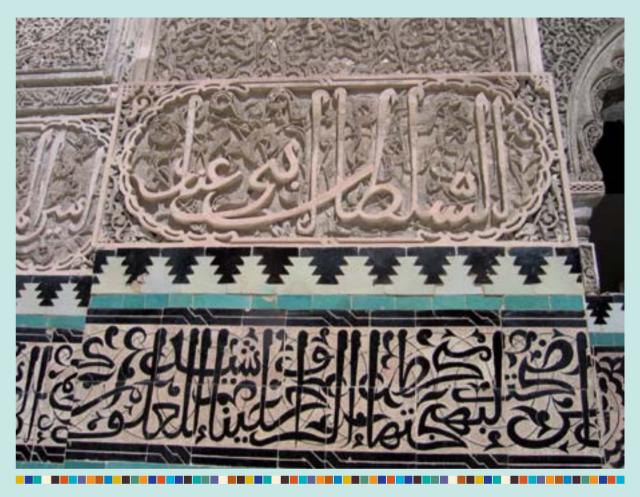
Pottery and the famous "Fez blue"

Fassi craftsmen have been producing enamelled ceramics since the 11th century. From

initial lump of clay to first firing of the potter's work, a whole series of stages must be accomplished before handing over the piece to its decorator, who adds his own floral and geometric motifs. Many of Morocco's finest ceramics come from the imperial city, instantly recognisable by their famous cobalt blue, a unique colour obtained by mixing a number of different ingredients in proportions that are kept a closely guarded secret. The dark green colour that distinguishes the tiles of the Qaraouiyine comes from a mixture of copper, sand, and lead oxide. A final firing at very high temperatures brings out the colours and waterproofs the finished item.







The extraordinary delicacy of Fassi craftsmen's work is fully apparent in the zellij and carved stuccowork they create



Fez stitch embroidery

This form of embroidery, unique for its double-face stitch, is a Fassi speciality that has been around since the days of the Almohads. The technique, which is carried out entirely by hand, consists of embroidering each motif on either side of the fabric so that both faces are identical, with stitches no

larger than 2 millimetres across. Fez stitch embroidery workshops are famous for the high quality of their products, which include exquisitely decorated tablecloths, doilies, napkins and shawls.

Cultural Fez



A wide range of cultural events are on the Fassi calendar from one end of the year to the other

The World Sacred Music Festival and the Fez Encounters colloquium Since its first airing in 1994, the World Festival of Sacred Music, under the auspices of the "Esprit de Fez", has met with a success that has reached far beyond the Kingdom's frontiers. The event offers a wide range of spiritual music and songs, upholding the spirit of Fez as a cultural capital orchestrating exchange between civilisations. It is recognised as one of the most important world music festivals anywhere, and was honoured by UNO in 2001 for its major contribution to promotion of dialogue between cultures and religions.

As part of the event, and open to a wide public, the Fez Encounters colloquium brings together intellectuals, scientists and humanists around a selected topic, and provides an occasion for exchange, dialogue, and debate in

the shade of the stately Barbary oak gracing the gardens of the Batha Museum.

Besides these two major events, the "Esprit de Fez' Foundation is also behind the Jazz in Riads Festival, held in a selection of the medina's palaces and residences and bringing together a whole host of famous musicians. The festival is an occasion for lovers of jazz to better acquaint themselves with its African and Mediterranean roots.

Held in October, the three-day Festival of Culinary Arts is a recent and unique addition to the Moroccan calendar, focusing on a theme that binds all of humanity together. Moroccan cuisine, like all the Kingdom's arts, acts as a lever of dialogue between cultures, and the event provides an opportunity for cuisines of the world to show their colours.





A crossroads of musical cultures, Fez celebrates its timeless spirituality with the World Sacred Music Festival

Sporting Fez



The variety of landscapes offered by the city's natural surroundings make them an ideal setting for all kinds of outdoor activities

The Fez Royal Golf Club

Located 15 km along the road to Immouzzer, the Fez Royal Golf Club's first-rate 18-hole course makes its way through luxuriant olive groves with the peaks of the Middle Atlas as a backdrop. Designed by architect Cabell B. Robinson, its naturally undulating terrain has been accentuated to provide steeply cambered fairways and insidiously sloping greens, and dotted with lakes and giant bunkers, the largest of which covers some 1200m2. Amenities include clubhouse, bar and restaurant, and it is regarded as one of the Kingdom's finest courses.

The Henri Leconte Academy
The Henry Leconte International
Tennis Academy's Royal Tennis
Club (RTC) provides fertile

ground for winkling out future lawn tennis champions. Set in 7 hectares of lush greenery, the centre is equipped with state-ofthe-art professional infrastructures that meet all the requirements for top level play.

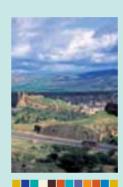
The Ain Amyer Equestrian Centre

If you're a horse-riding enthusiast, Fez provides a whole range of activities to choose from, whatever your particular interests or level of skills, including riding lessons, excursions, and full-scale treks through the region. The horse moussem held at Tissa (45 km from Fez) by the Hyaynas tribes pays well-deserved tribute to Arab horses and the traditions that have grown up around them.



Fez Royal Golf Club

The city's surroundings: springs and mountains



The mountains surrounding the city are famed for their thermal springs, and provide opportunities for excursions of all kinds

Fez lies on the Saiss Plain at the very edge of the Middle Atlas mountain range, in a region that is a nature lover's paradise. Its richly varied landscapes - lush green valleys, cedar forests, thermal springs, and yellow ochre-toned mountainsides - provide opportunities for excursions of all kinds, to experience unimagined worlds beyond the reach of time.

Moulay Yacoub

The best time to visit this historic spatown 20 km west of Fez is probably in spring, when reawakening nature transforms its surroundings into an ocean of greenery. The town's sulphurous hot waters have long been famed for curing rheumatisms and other ailments, and its thermal baths also offer a range of programmes designed to get you back on tip-top form. The resort has always been popular among Moroccans, and in the 1930s, both André Gide and Henry de Montherlant made good use of its amenities.

Sidi Harazem

Located just 15 km from Fez, this thermal spring has been known for its therapeutic properties since the 16th century. These days, you can enjoy the waters in the comfort of a modern spa resort. And between glasses, pay a visit to the nearby white Koubba of Sidi Harazem, where an ancient sacred pool, protected by a cupola, stands in the midst of eucalyptus, palm trees and oleanders.

Sefrou

Sefrou is a small Berber town 30 km south of Fez, known for its waterfalls and the diversity of the surrounding countryside. A major farming centre, the town's name has become synonymous with the Cherry Festival that takes place there every June. A few kilometres away, along a road that climbs through slopes dotted with olive trees, lies the village of Bhalil, celebrated for its troglodyte cave dwellings.

Imouzzer Kandar

Imouzzer Kandar is a delightful little village thirty kilometres from Fez and standing some 1300 metres above sea level, enjoying a mild climate during the summer. A real haven of peace, the region is known for its fruit trees, and is a major producer of apples, walnuts, and figs. Its landscapes are well worth exploring, and such simple pleasures as trout fishing and mushroom gathering are yours to enjoy.



Information and useful addresses

Practical information

Entry formalities

A valid passport for a stay of less than 90 days is required. An identity card may suffice, depending on country of origin, if the trip is organised by a travel agency for a group of over 8 people. A visa is required for some nationalities - enquire at a Moroccan consulate or diplomatic representation in you country. No specific vaccinations are required for entry into the Kingdom of Morocco. If you are bringing your pet along with you, however, you will need to be able to produce an anti-rabies certificate less than 6 months old.



Moroccan currency is the dirham, made up of 100 centimes. Foreign currency must be exchanged at banks or other accredited establishments.

Time zone

Morocco is in the Greenwich time zone, and time is G.M.T.

Event Calendar

May : Fez World Sacred Music Festival
July : Festival of Amazigh Culture
October : Fez Culinary Arts Festival

November : Fez Jazz Festival

Useful addresses and contacts

Regional Tourist Office:

Avenue Mohamed V
Tel.: (00 212) 5 35 62 34 60
Fax: (00 212) 5 35 65 43 70

Regional Tourism Council:

89, avenue Allal Ben Abdellah Tel.: (00 212) 5 35 94 24 92 Fax: (00 212) 5 35 65 01 88

ONCF Railway station:

rue Imarate Arabia

Call Center: 08 90 20 30 40 www.oncf.ma

Fez-Saiss Airport :

Call center: 08 90 00 08 00

Golf : Royal golf de Fez www.golfdumaroc.com

Weather Forecast:

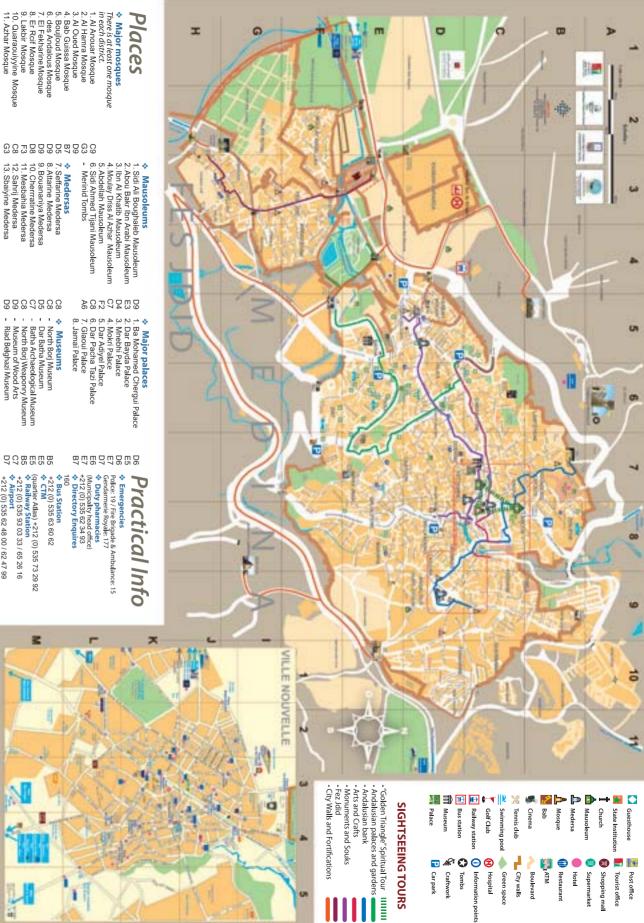
www.meteoma.net

Office des Changes

(Currency Regulator Authority): www.oc.gov.ma

Emergency phone numbers

Police 19 Fire Brigade 150 Directory enquiries 160 Road safety services 177







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WWW.VISITMOROCCO.COM