

Casablanca

IN MOROCCO





Casablanca



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Editorial

Casablanca, an exhilarating megalopolis

The sun is scarcely above the horizon and Casablanca is already waking up. Little red taxis play dodgems at the feet of the white city's ultra-modern buildings. There is no escaping the allure of its grandeur, its pure energy, and all of a sudden we ourselves are imbued with the same heady dynamism.

Casablanca, economic heart of the Kingdom, lives at a frenetic pace. Business and art go side by side here, often intermingling. It is here, above all, that tones and trends are set.

Why is it that so many artists have found their inspiration in Casablanca? Perhaps the contrasting curves of its Art Deco buildings are enough to cast a spell over them. The richness of the city's architectural heritage is sufficient in itself to call forth the image of a city where time has no hold. Charged with history yet resolutely turned towards the future, this most cosmopolitan of cities, where every nationality is represented, parades its modernity for all to see.

Morocco's economic nerve centre and keeper of a unique historical heritage, Casablanca reveals all of its many faces to us.



In Casablanca, modern buildings stand side by side with Arab-Andalusian architecture and Art Deco creations from the 1920s



A city with the ocean on its doorstep



Aerial view of Casablanca coastline

No historian has ever been able to finally determine who it was that founded the town of Anfa that was eventually to become Casablanca. Some claim that it was founded in Roman times, while others point to the Phoenicians or the Zenete Berbers. Under the aegis of the Merinid dynasty, Anfa remained a small town open to sea trade with foreign lands. It was inhabited by sailors and pirates who thought nothing of attacking passing ships, and in 1468 the Portuguese invaded it and razed it to the ground in an effort to protect their trade. Under the Alaouite dynasty, during the reign of Sultan Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah (1757-1790), the town rose from the ashes and became "Dar Al Baida" – "White House" or, in the Spanish tongue, "Casa Blanca". The

decision to build the Kingdom's first major modern port at Casablanca was taken in 1912. During the Second World War, the port was to take on considerable strategic importance.

As the scene of the Anfa Conference (14 to 24 January 1943), the city received Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt and Charles de Gaulle along with a host of diplomats – and diplomatic dealings are only a step away from doing business! The region's economic development was spurred onwards and upwards by the city's burgeoning port activity, tapping national and foreign investment and giving birth to a modern metropolis that has now become the Kingdom's economic capital.



A Casablanca street from the 1930s



Casablancon Art Deco in all its glory

Not to be missed out on

In Casablanca, every stone of every district has a story to tell. As you make your way through the city, you cross from one era to another, increasingly persuaded that past and present have here become one.

Facing the port, the Sqala is a fortified bastion built in the 18th century by Sultan Mohamed Ben Abdallah.

This bygone defensive post now accommodates a restaurant, but the "Moorish café" still has its ancient cannons pointing out to sea. Make your way inside the fortress and you will find a pleasant Andalusian garden lined with trees, exotic flora and mint-scented flowerbeds.

Near the port, just a stone's throw from "Place des Nations", the medina is the oldest part of the city.

It was destroyed by an earthquake in 1755, and has a more contemporary feel to it than the medinas to be found in other Moroccan towns, its atypical style a mixture of Arabo-Muslim and colonial architecture. Nonetheless, all the authenticity of Moroccan tradition lives on in its narrow little streets and their tightly-packed rows of shops.

Walking through the city centre, visitors cannot fail to be struck by the legacy of the "Années Folles". With their buildings adorned with cupolas, columns and sculpted balconies, the 1920s and 30s were a period of unique artistic expression. Casablanca's neoclassical, art deco and Moorish styles continue to attract and inspire architects from all over the world.



The "Café de la Sqala", a former fortified bastion now transformed into a haven of peace where you can enjoy quenching your thirst in the cool shade of its walls

A city of the future



The Habous district

The Habous district in the southeast of the city was built in the 1920s. Its architects, while remaining faithful to traditional styles and customs, took care to comply with the dictates of modern urban planning. A district with a character all of its own, it is made up of narrow streets, little squares and stonework arcades, and accommodates a multitude of bazaars and shops selling traditional craftwork.

The Mahkama, a fine building completed in 1952, was once the city's courthouse as well as acting as the venue for the Pasha's receptions. To-

day, it is the head office of the Prefecture of Mechouar. The decoration of its courtyards and sixty-four rooms makes full use of the many riches of Moroccan art, and is reminiscent of history's great Arabo-Andalusian palaces.

The port has continued to develop ever since its creation in 1907. Comprising a commercial port, a shipyard and a yachting harbour equipped with boarding quays for tourist ferries and liners, Morocco's leading port continues to be an essential factor in the white city's economic growth.



Casablanca's port



The white city's new coast road – good living on the shores of the ocean

Casablanca, between business and pleasure

Casablanca is a rapidly expanding business city provided with a full range of modern infrastructures. No less than 60% of Morocco's cutting-edge companies and most of its banks are headquartered there and its new, ultra-modern Mohammed V Airport is a large-scale aviation hub. Being so close to Europe, the city attracts increasing numbers of companies and is the venue for a whole range of seminars and congresses all year round. A major business centre and spacious facilities have been designed to accommodate events of whatever magnitude. Whether you come on holiday or on business, Casablanca is a city to enjoy, with no lack of fine hotels to choose from or entertainment to sample.

A wide range of leisure activities are on offer, including golf and water sports. Along the Corniche (coast road), life is lived to the full, with an endless variety of activities on tap day and night – cafes, restaurants, ice-cream parlours, luxury hotels, shopping malls, playgrounds, shows, discos, cinemas, water-sports clubs and much more besides. The development of leisure activities is a top priority for the city, which will soon be boasting a marina set in the heart of a complex combining luxury hotels, offices and apartments. Not far off, in the Anfa district - the "Moroccan Beverly Hills" - you can acquaint yourself with the city's classiest neighbourhood and the extraordinarily varied architecture of its superb villas.



The Twin Center

The Hassan II Mosque



The full splendour of the work carried out by Morocco's master craftsmen shines forth from every corner of the Hassan II Mosque

The Hassan II Mosque is the largest in the world after those in Mecca and Medina, an architectural masterpiece standing partly over the ocean and built by His late Majesty King Hassan II. The ground floor of this magnificent religious edifice houses a perfectly symmetrical rectangular prayer room supported by seventy-eight pillars, where the intermingled reflections of granite, marble and onyx dazzle the eyes. Roofed with emerald green tiles, the room can accommodate 20,000 worshippers inside and 80,000 more on the esplanade that acts as an extension to it. The Hassan II Mosque also

includes a medersa, a library, a national museum and a series of conference rooms. Superbly decorated by craftsmen from throughout Morocco, the edifice cannot but strike wonder in the heart - frescoes and zellij work adorned with geometrical motifs, carved and painted woodwork, richly intertwined stucco work, arabesques with abstract or calligraphied motifs, all bearing ample witness to the extraordinary skill and innovative spirit of Moroccan craftsmen. Guided tours open to non-Muslims are organised daily except for Fridays and at prayer times.



The Hassan II Mosque's minaret, the highest anywhere in the world, towers over the Atlantic Ocean

Casablanca, a happening city



Casablanca is the scene of internationally acclaimed events, cultural and sporting alike

A hotpot bubbling with cultural influences, Casablanca is fertile ground for Moroccan artistic creation. Young and dynamic as it is, the city is the scene of a whole range of events.

The Casablanca Festival

For a few days in July, Casablanca becomes an international meeting-place for the stars of the musical world. Performers from all four corners of the world gather to provide the Casablanca public with a truly out-of-the-ordinary round of entertainment. A heady mix of styles and colours, the “Festival Casa Music” brings in 1.5 million onlookers.

The “Boulevard” of young musicians Created in 1999, the “boulevard”, as it has been nicknamed, is an urban music festival that enables the new Moroccan scene to get themselves heard by a wider audience. Alongside festival programming, workshops and competitions – known as “Tremplins”, meaning

“springboards” – are organised for newly formed groups. Rap, Rock, Fusion – you name it! The boulevard is an event that truly represents Morocco’s underground music scene.

Theatre and Culture Festival

A combination of performing arts, concerts, dance, theatre and lectures, this heterogeneous festival seeks to promote multicultural experiment, an opportunity for fresh encounters and exchanges, and to experience artistic creations from a host of different countries.

Casablanca International Marathon

Casablanca first opened its doors to the world’s marathon runners in 2008. Participants follow a 42-km itinerary that takes them through the city’s different neighbourhoods from its Art Deco centre to the Corniche via palm-tree lined boulevards. An excellent way of getting to know the city at top speed!



As part of the “Boulevard”, the Tremplin gives young Moroccan talents a unique opportunity to express themselves



On the track of “Casablanca” the film

In the middle of the Second World War, Casablanca provided the background for the tragic love story of Rick and Ilsa. This is fiction we’re talking about, of course! It was in 1942 that Michael Curtiz made “Casablanca”, in which Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman portrayed the romantic hero and heroine torn between love and duty. The film was an immediate success and the city of Casablanca was thenceforth associated with the romantic image given to it by the cinema of the 1940s, although not a single scene in the movie was actually shot there.

Over fifty years later, the famous film continues to haunt tourists’ imagination. But now, however, fiction has become reality. The legendary “Rick’s Café” has been faithfully recreated on the edge of the old medina. Step over the threshold and let your imagination do the rest...



The city by night. Casablanca dresses up in a thousand and one lights to dazzle its visitors

Experiencing the city



Bursting with life, Casablanca is a source of inspiration for creators of all kinds

A centre for artistic expression

Concerts, exhibitions and stage plays – the metropolis is full to the brim with cultural activities, boasting a wide variety of exhibition and performance venues. Among others, the Mégarama cinema complex puts on concerts and one-man shows. Foreign centres and institutes also provide richly diverse programming. The Villa des Arts presents temporary exhibitions throughout the year.

The Caftan, symbol of Casablanca Haute Couture

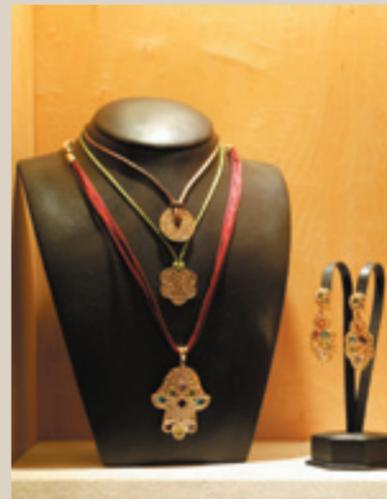
Casablanca is an amazing mixture of genres, and it's hardly surprising that it stimulates young talents in the fashion world. Drawing inspiration in the heart of this cosmopolitan city, Casablanca creators have imposed their own style, daring reinterpretations of the Caftan



hovering between tradition and modernity. But although you might discern renaissance touches here and there, Indian influences or the Rock'n'Roll spirit, "made in Casa" haute couture still evokes the Thousand and One Nights!

Casablanca by night

Far away from the hubble-bubble of the city centre, the Corniche is a favourite destination for locals in search of a spot of relaxation. As evening falls, the Corniche unmasks itself. An obligatory port of call for merrymakers, it reveals the many faces of night-time in Casablanca. A plethora of restaurants and clubs frequented by the "in-crowd" line the seafront, attracting the city's youth along with the tourists. From oriental cabaret shows to jazz clubs, there really is something to suit every taste.



From amusement parks to gourmet restaurants, Casablanca has enough going on to keep everyone happy



Sophisticated, inventive and international - Gourmet eating in Casablanca

The city has some real treats in store for the taste buds, with French, Spanish, Italian and Asian specialities all on offer amongst a host of other delights. Here and there, Mediterranean savours mingle with the exotic flavours of the Far East. Such culinary combinations are hardly surprising, considering how many foreign chefs have made their homes in Casablanca, bringing with them the best in international cuisine. Cookery is an art that reinvents itself day by day, and

a number of creative souls have seen their attempts at fusion meet with success. Don't hold back...

Amusement parks meeting international standards

Whatever your age, treat yourself to all the fun of the fair! There are several amusement parks under construction on the outskirts of the city, all meeting international standards. Merry-go-rounds, water games and zoological gardens – away from it all just a few minutes from the centre! You can already enjoy taking to the waters at Aquaparc Tamaris, Morocco's largest aquapark.

Activities in the city



At the hammam or on a green – relaxation of body and mind guaranteed!

A golfer's paradise

Casablanca has always lived up to its image as a golfer's paradise. Old hands and amateurs alike have no lack of fine courses to choose from in and around the city. Anfa Royal Golf Club enjoys a truly superb setting, the air filled with the scent of eucalyptus. Its 2710-metre par 35 course requires a good deal of skill and technique.

Just a few kilometres away, the Mohammedia Royal Golf Club and the Bouznika Bay, El Jadida, Mazagan and Benslimane clubs combine golf with a range of seaside or forestland activities. New luxury residential complexes have sprung up around their shimmering greens. Whether you look

on golf as a way of life or just a pastime, you'll be free to enjoy the game any which way you choose.

Wellness

Seawater and seaweed combined with top-quality equipment – all you need to get you back on tip-top form or for a beneficial spot of health holidaying. Casablanca's thalassotherapy centres offer curative or preventive wellness programmes based on natural resources and other natural beauty products.

For truly relaxing holidays and a guaranteed change of scenery, there are packages combining bodycare cures with discovery of the city's historical heritage.



The Anfa Royal Golf Club, Casablanca



Whether it's Moroccan craftwork or western fashion you're after, the white city has everything you could wish for and more

Shopping

Like Casablanca itself, shopping in the city has a dual attraction – that of the traditional Moroccan craftwork on offer and that of the world's top luxury brands.

If it's traditional craftwork you're looking for, then the souks are the place to go.

Your shopping expedition could get underway at Bab El Jedid in the old medina. In the Habous district, craftsmen in the copper souk will work the metal and create all manner

of copperware before your very eyes – finely chased trays, lanterns, teapots, and more besides.

Morocco's economic capital also lives to the dictates of western fashion.

All major international jewellery and ready-to-wear brands are represented here, mostly to be found in the up-market Gauthier and Maarif neighbourhoods and along Boulevard d'Anfa. Ultra-modern shopping malls have also sprung up in the city.



Casablanca, seaside resort



Along Casablanca's ocean shores, relaxation and getting away from it all are the order of the day

Casablanca is a seaside city with countless activities to choose from, including a full range of water sports. Jet skiing, surfing, recreational fishing and sailboarding are all widely practised along the coast, and there are several schools providing courses at all levels of skill. The more experienced will easily be able to get hold of whatever equipment they need for their ocean adventures.

Want to get far away from the bustle of the city? Then dive down deep and let yourself be lulled by the silent sym-

phony of the ocean. Experienced diving instructors are on hand to take you down to explore the sea depths and acquaint you with the wondrous fauna that inhabit them.

Breathing in the seaside air, making the utmost of the sun, basking on the warm sands or taking a refreshing dip in the ocean waves – it's all there, with all the time in the world to simply laze the day away. Restaurants, gyms, swimming pools with views over the ocean... Just lie back and enjoy!



A whole range of water-sports activities for the more energetic amongst us to enjoy



Whether it's a day's stopover or year-round mooring you're after, your boat will find everything it requires at the new marina, a yachting harbour provided with a full range of infrastructures – hotels, restaurants, water-sports clubs and residences - and symbolising the city's success at harmonious integration of leisure activities.

As you stroll around the environs of Casablanca's port, you will be sure to catch a glimpse of one or more of the great tourist liners that frequent it.

After nightfall, their lights illuminate the entire port area, creating an altogether magical spectacle. Many Mediterranean cruises schedule stopovers at Casablanca. Here's another way of discovering the delights of our coastline – a truly exhilarating and out-of-the-ordinary experience!

The Casablanca region



You don't need to travel far inland or along the coast from Casablanca to find a host of stopovers to enjoy

The surrounding beaches

As you leave Casablanca itself, the Atlantic coast has some wonderful beaches in store for you – immense stretches of sand, such as are to be found at Sidi Rahal, located thirty or so kilometres south west of the city. Closer at hand, the golden sands of Dar Bouazza are an irresistible invitation to relaxation. With its many private beaches and fine restaurants, Tamaris attracts families and the young “in-crowd” alike. Or there’s a different ambience to enjoy if you take the Rabat road and stop off for the day at Dahomey beach, bordered with seaside chalets and providing a very pleasant setting for holidaymakers along with fine waves for surfers.

Mohammedia

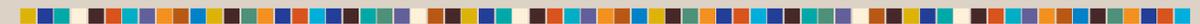
Lying on the coast 25 kilometres north of Casablanca, Mohammedia – known as “Fedala” in bygone days – largely owes its development to the oil companies that have located there. As well as being an industrial centre, it is also a university town containing a choice of highly-reputed faculties and schools. Well known, too, as a

fishing port and for the quality of its fish restaurants, the town attracts tourists and connoisseurs of good food alike.

Having treated yourself to a plate of seafood, you might like to take a stroll into the heart of the old kasbah and have a look at the white mosque there, built by Sultan Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah, or take yourself off to the water-sports centre, where a whole range of activities is on offer, including tennis, yachting, sailing and jetskiing. Not to be missed – every spring, Mohammedia decks itself in floral attire for its flower festival. Its streets are filled with the scent of roses, and Fedala, City of Flowers, lives once again!

Benslimane

Located some sixty kilometres from Casablanca, Benslimane is famed for its climate and its golf club. Wild-boar hunting also flourishes in the area, whose dazzling natural heritage makes it one of Morocco’s major ecotourism regions. The town lies in one of the largest stretches of forestland in the Kingdom (over 60,000 hectares of green oak, thuja and cypress).



With the sea spray fresh in your face, set off to explore the wonders of the woodlands

The Casablanca region



Just an hour away from the economic capital, El Jadida, the old Portuguese city of Mazagan, delivers up its rich history to visitors

Azemmour

Azemmour is a little fortified town nestling on the banks of Oued Oum Er R'bia. Like El Jadida, it was subject to Portuguese influence, many signs of which are still to be seen in its streets.

Wandering through the medina, you will see the legacy left by Portuguese architecture in the doors of its houses. Protected by its ramparts, the ruined kasbah is dominated by a tower with windows fashioned in the gothic style. Visitors will find themselves spell-bound by its discreet charm.

Mazagan

Set alongside the eternal ocean, its beach stretching as far as the eye can see, and surrounded by richly scented flora, the new holiday destination "Mazagan Beach Resort" has everything you could possibly wish for – luxury hotels, comfortable villas,

casino, golf club, and a whole range of other activities on offer throughout the year.

El Jadida

The Portuguese fortified city of Mazagan lies to the southwest of Casablanca, its face proudly turned towards the ocean. Marvellously preserved, it comprises a remarkable mix of Moroccan and European influences. Its bastions, intertwining streets and ancient walls have long inspired the world of cinema. Make your way into the heart of the city and experience the subtly lighted vaults of the magnificent Portuguese cistern, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site and chosen by Orson Wells as a location for his film "Othello". Hovering between past and present, El Jadida makes an ideal holiday destination.



the Casablanca region boasts a host of destinations where well-being, leisure activities and the discovery of the Kingdom's historical heritage go hand in hand

The kasbah of Boulaouane

A fortress built in the 17th century by Sultan Moulay Ismail, the Boulaouane kasbah is one of the treasures of Morocco's architectural heritage. Standing on a hillside, it overlooks the valley, providing breath-taking panoramic views, with Oued Oum Er R'bia winding its way across the plain down below. Travel a few kilometres and you may well see birds of prey scouring the skies. Falconry is an age-old art that still survives in the Doukkala region. Stop off in Ouled Frej, where the Lekouassem falconers put on an unforgettable show. Not to be missed!



The Oualidia lagoon

Located between El Jadida and Safi, the fishing village of Oualidia attracts large numbers of tourists. The turquoise waters of its lagoon and its calm seas make for some great diving and are ideal for apprentice surfers. But if you come to Oualidia, it's first and foremost in order to sample the town's fresh fish and famous oysters!

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 3 people. A visa is required for some nationalities – enquire at a Moroccan consulate or diplomatic representation in your country. No specific vaccinations are required for entry into the Kingdom of Morocco. If you are taking your pet along with you, make sure you have its vaccination booklet available.

Changing money:

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.

Emergency phone numbers:

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

Weather forecast: www.meteoma.net

Office des Changes

(Currency regulator authorities):
www.oc.gov.ma

Event Calendar:

January : Theatre and Culture Festival, Casablanca
March : International Laughter Festival, Casablanca
International Video Arts Festival, Casablanca
May : "Boulevard" Festival, Casablanca
Jazz Festival, Casablanca
Spring Festival, Azzemour
June : Maroc Offshore, Casablanca
Flower Festival, Mohammedia

Useful addresses and contacts:

Regional Tourist Office:

55, Rue Omar Slaoui - Casablanca
Tel.: 05 22 27 11 77 / 27 95 33
Fax: 05 22 20 59 29

20 bis, avenue Al Mokaouama - El Jadida

Tel.: 05 34 47 88
Fax: 05 23 34 47 89

Av. Hassan II. Imm El Ahram. BP 257 - Settat

Tel.: 05 23 40 58 07
Fax: 05 23 40 58 07

Regional Tourism Council:

60 bis, Avenue Hassan II
Tel.: 05 22 20 62 65 / 66
Fax: 05 22 20 54 05

ONCF Railway station:

Casa-Port / Casa Oasis / Casa Voyageurs
Call Center : 08 90 20 30 40
Site: www.oncf.ma

Mohammed V Airport:

Route de Marrakech
Call center : 08 90 00 08 00

Golfs: www.golfdumaroc.com

Anfa Royal Golf Club
Tel.: 05 22 36 10 26 / Fax: 05 22 39 33 74

Mohammedia Royal Golf Club
Tel.: 05 23 32 46 56 / Fax: 05 23 32 11 02

Benslimane Royal Golf Club
Tel.: 05 22 27 17 85 / Fax: 05 22 27 17 79

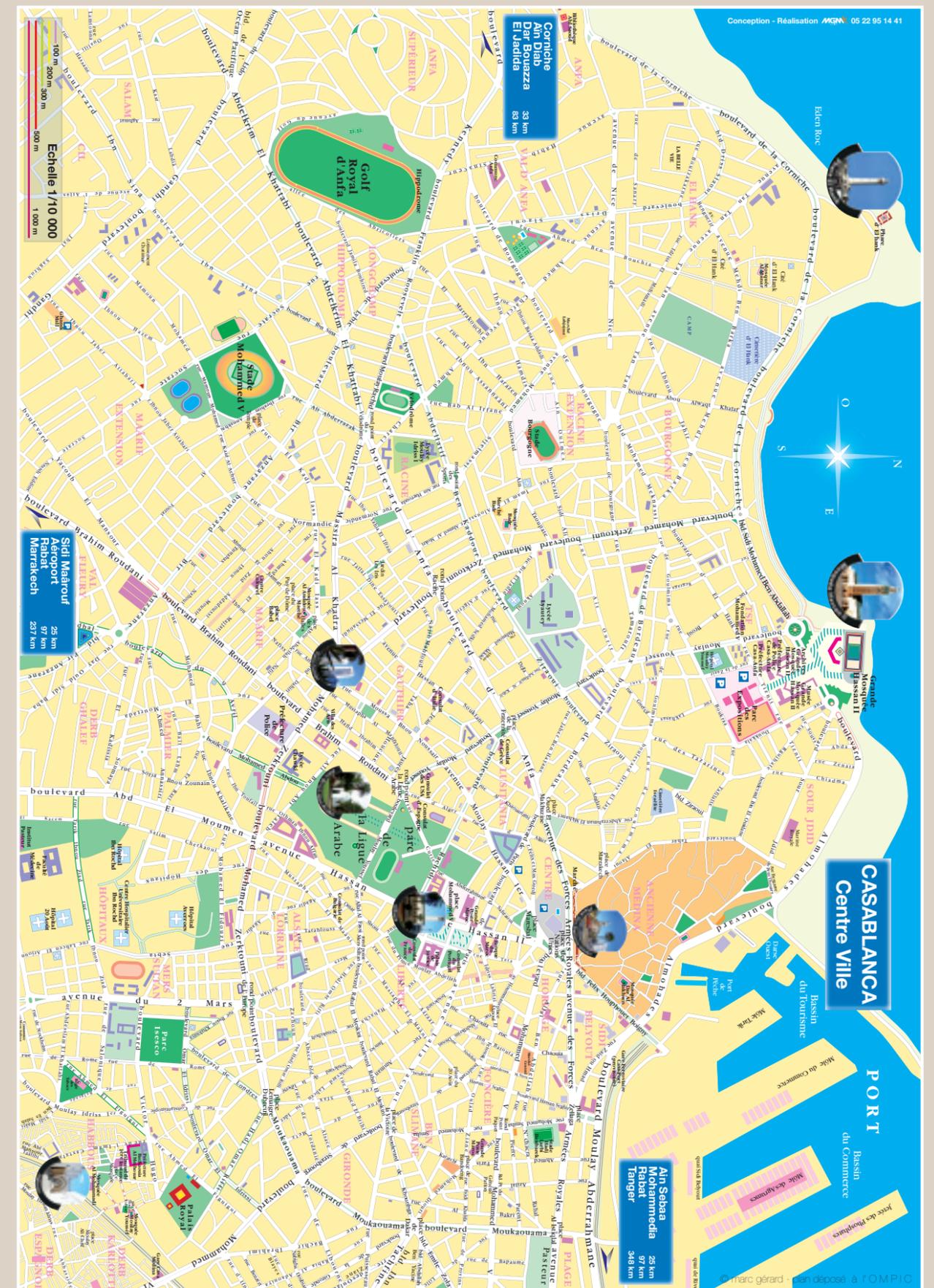
Bouznika Bay Golf Club
Tel.: 05 37 62 53 71 / Fax: 05 37 62 53 73

University Royal Golf club
Tel.: 05 23 40 21 31 / Fax: 05 23 40 21 75

El Jadida royal Golf Club
Tel.: 05 23 35 22 51 / Fax: 05 23 35 41 50

Mazagan Golf club
Tel.: 05 23 38 80 70

For further information: www.visitmorocco.com





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