

## How to get there?

By far the most popular service is with **easyJet** who fly daily from **Gatwick** and three times per week from Manchester. **You will always get 20kg baggage allowance in the hold.** Here are the flight times:

<p><b>LONDON</b> - <i>Before end April</i> - every day</p> <p>Gatwick (07:50) – Marrakech (11:25) or Gatwick (15:30) – Marrakech (19:05)</p> <p>Marrakech (12:05) – Gatwick (15:40) or Marrakech (19:45) – Gatwick (23:20)</p>	<p><b>LONDON</b> - <i>After end April</i> - every day</p> <p>Gatwick (06:25) – Marrakech (09:25) Marrakech (09:45) – Gatwick (14:15)</p>
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<p><b>MANCHESTER</b> - <i>Before end April</i> - Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday</p> <p>Manchester (15:10) – Marrakech (19:15) Marrakech (19:55) – Manchester (23:40)</p>	<p><b>MANCHESTER</b> - <i>After end April</i> - Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday</p> <p>Manchester (13:40) – Marrakech (16:45) Marrakech (17:20) – Manchester (22:05)</p>
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There is also a service with **Royal Air Maroc** from **Gatwick**, although they are usually more expensive than easyJet. **Again, 20kg baggage allowance is included.**

Flights depart Gatwick at 12:00 midday and arrive in to Marrakech at 15:25.

The flight home leaves Marrakech at 07:30 and arrives back in to Gatwick at 11:05.

**ThomsonFly** also fly from **Manchester** on Mondays and Fridays which means you can do a Friday - Monday (3 night weekend break) or a Monday - Friday (4 night midweek break) or a 7 night break. Again 20kg baggage allowance in the hold is included.

Finally **Ryanair** fly from **Bristol, East Midlands, Edinburgh, and Luton**. Baggage allowance is 15kg. We are unable to book Ryanair flights as part of a package, however if you book them yourself then we would be delighted to organise the transfers and accommodation for you.

One thing to remember though is that if we book your flights for you, then your holiday constitutes a 'package', and this actually gives you more rights if things go wrong, as well as being 100% financially protected by ATOL.

### **Tip** Book Early!!

There are two very good reasons why you should book as early as possible. First, riads are very small properties with just a handful of rooms, and because they are in such demand, many are often sold out well in advance. To get your first choice, please book as early as possible especially during holiday periods.

Second, because flights get more expensive the closer you get to departure, holidays booked early cost less than the same holiday booked nearer the time! This is even more true over holiday periods when the cost of flights along can be several hundred pounds each, even on easyJet.

## **Tip** Stay in a Riad!!

Marrakech has big brand name hotels just like other cities, but it also has a unique type of accommodation – riads. These are small Moroccan houses turned into little boutique hotels, and full of character. They are also great value.

Most are designed around a central courtyard with a fountain, while others have a rooftop terrace. The views of Marrakech are spectacular, and having breakfast or dinner up there listening to the sounds of the city below is enchanting and a truly memorable experience.

## 5 things that may surprise you!

1. The first is just how quick and easy it is to get here. The flight from Gatwick is just 3.5 hours, and then an easy 15 minute ride into Marrakech. You'll usually be in Marrakech in time for lunch!
2. The second is that you can wander freely around the medina and the souks and not be constantly be asked to buy a carpet! Apparently there is a rule that you cannot hassle tourists.
3. The third is the quality and the character of the restaurants. We picked up a tourist map at the airport which as they always do had dozens of adverts for places to eat. What really struck me was that not only was the food excellent but the ambience and decor was usually very Moroccan, and the restaurants full of character. Prices varied enormously - we eat like kings and queens for very little on one night, but then splashed out the next in La Sultana, a very special hotel with tables arranged beside the pool and a trio of musicians playing softly in the background.
4. Riads are very quiet! You can be in the middle of all the goings in or near the medina and yet because of the thick walls, once you're inside your riad it's like an oasis of calm and tranquility.
5. It's like stepping back in time! Wandering through the souks and the medina, it is easy to imagine how life was hundreds of years ago as donkeys and mules bring goods through the maze of narrow winding streets to the tiny shops in the medina.

## Where to Stay, and for how long?

This can be a hard choice because there are so many beautiful properties to choose from, however we can group them as follows:

BUDGET with character - Tichka Salam

FIRST CLASS riads - Riad Blanc, Riad Tiwaline, Riad Kniza, Riad Si Said, Les Borjs de la Kasbah, Riad Bab Firdaus, Palais Sebban

DELUXE riads - La Sultana

Apart from Tichka Salam which is about 10 minutes away, all are very centrally located and within walking distance of all the main sights.

If you are booking several months in advance then you are normally OK with your first choice, but often we find that the riads are full close to the date and you need to have a second or third choice, or possibly upgrade your room if say there is only a particular room category available. in your first choice.

In addition to the ones listed on the website, we also have several other hotels and riads, and sometimes we will offer you one of these anyway if there is a particularly good offer available.

We find that the most popular duration is 5 nights which gives you time to soak up the atmosphere, see the main sights, have a day in the Atlas Mountains or beyond, and a day or two relaxing. The next most popular duration is 4 nights. But subject to flights you can have any duration you want.

Don't forget also that you can book a twin or even multi centre holiday. The most popular combination we do is something like 3 nights Marrakech + 4 nights Essaouira, a delightful seaside town about three hours away from Marrakech with a golden sandy beach. Our two favourites are the Sofitel Essaouira Medina & Spa which is just 10 minutes walk from the gates of the Old Town, and the deluxe Riad, L'Heure Bleue Palais.

Another combination is to stay a night or more in the Atlas Mountains away from Marrakech. There is of course nothing wrong with having your whole holiday here! The one we are asked for most often is the famous Kasbah Tamadot, owned by Richard Branson, a magical and luxurious mountain retreat.

And finally if you don't want to stay the night, why not book a special trip available from Marrakech, "Lunch at the Bransons"? This is a full day in the Atlas Mountains with lunch at Kasbah Tamadot. The price is usually around £80 per person.

## When to go?

As rain is very low throughout the year, your main concern will be the temperature. July and August are hot, with temperatures reaching the 90s. The coldest month is January when they reach the high 60s. Night times are cool in winter - you'll need a jacket to go out, but still much milder than in the UK.

We are often asked about Ramadan. In 2010 it will be from 11 August to 9 September, and at this time some cafes and restaurants do not serve alcohol.

## Finally - why Marrakech?

It is hard to imagine another city that conjures up as much magic as Marrakech. It is easy and quick to reach, is largely hassle free, and benefits from one of the most beautiful locations in Africa, at the foot of the Atlas Mountains. The main square, Djemma el Fna, is full of life - musicians, dancers, acrobats, places to eat and drink and even snake charmers. You can easily spend hours just wandering around the souks and the main square taking everything in. Add in the fine restaurants, friendly people and gorgeous places to stay, and you have the ingredients for the perfect holiday.

This is a personal guide written by Tom Seddon, manager of "On Your Travels" based on firsthand experience. Please let us know if you think something should be included.