

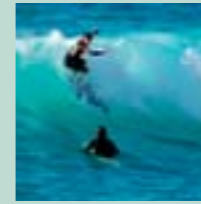
Nature & Adventure

IN MOROCCO





Nature & Adventure



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Editorial



*A virgin beach on the
Mediterranean coast*

Morocco, land of nature and adventure

Few countries in the world are blessed with as much diversity as Morocco. Diversity of geology and landscapes, of flora and fauna, of humanity and of cultural heritages. From the Atlas to the Rif, from the Atlantic coastline to the shores of the Mediterranean, from fine sandy beaches to isolated rocky creeks, and from the great golden dunes of the South to luxuriant green oases – in Morocco, nature has let her imagination run wild.

A land of a thousand faces, changing with every season; a land where dreams are lived and where the ancient traditions of the Orient prosper; a land for fresh encounters and new sensations; a land where hospitality reigns supreme – Morocco will not fail to amaze all those curious enough to venture off the beaten track to discover its true nature.



Dunes near Laayoune

Taking to the heights



Height of pleasure...

A land of mountains

Morocco and its mountains! In the North, the majestic Rif massif stretches from Tangier in the east to the territories of the Rifi tribes on the Algerian border, a chain reaching 2000 metres in height, overlooking a succession of sun-soaked coastal towns, its slopes dotted with magnificent isolated villages. Yet more impressive, the Atlas Mountains, with their snow-capped peaks, traverse the Kingdom from north to south, their name bringing to mind the Greek myth of the titan Atlas, condemned by Zeus to hold up the heavens forever on his shoulders. Nicknamed the “roof of Morocco”, this is the highest range in North Africa, and separates Saharan Morocco from Atlantic and Mediterranean Morocco.

Adventure calling!

Morocco’s mountains are an irresistible invitation to sports lovers and nature lovers alike. In summer, exploration of their slopes can take the form of mountain-bike trekking, rafting the rivers that course through their landscapes, or hang-gliding from their giddy heights. In winter, the right gear quickly becomes the order of the day and board sports such as skiing and snow surfing make an ideal complement to more arduous excursions into the wild. The more battle-hardened can pit themselves against the slopes, climbing their summits up on to the “roof of Morocco” to enjoy breathtaking views of the land far below them.



Parachuting, for beginners and professionals alike, is another way of discovering Morocco’s natural diversity

Seen from the skies

Extreme sports fans can try their hand at parachuting. A small aerodrome near Beni Mellal welcomes beginners and old hands alike, and you can make your first jump (from 4000 metres!) with an expert to accompany you on the way down.

a feast for the eyes, the other a joy to the heart. Whether you choose to stay in a hotel, a guesthouse or a gite, or to lodge with one of the locals, you’ll find yourself in warmly welcoming and comfortable surroundings, with the right equipment available and professional guides on hand to help you discover the rich natural heritage awaiting you wherever you may be, and the best places to stop and rest a while over a good meal.

A genuine welcome

The beauty of the landscapes is perfectly matched by the authenticity of the welcome you receive – the one



The legendary Atlas Mountains

The High Atlas

This is Morocco's highest massif, with the majestic Jbel Toubkal standing at over 4167 metres above sea level. It forms an immense natural barrier some 750 km in length, its abrupt slopes hiding away fertile green valleys in their folds – mountains that have resisted the passage of time and have preserved their natural splendour and the age-old civilisation that makes them its home. Board sports enthusiasts will delight in Oukaïmeden, which, set at an altitude of over 2650 metres, is Africa's highest ski resort.

Curiosity

Over 2000 five-millennia-old rock carvings are to be found on sandstone slabs scattered around the village of Oukaïmeden and on the Yagour Plateau. An unforgettable visit! Oued Ouzoud, near Beni Mellal, is born of the convergence of several mountain rivulets, and plunges from a height of over 110 metres to the bottom of a lush green abyss strewn with limestone rocks. The mist of spray arising from the rocks creates a permanent rainbow, along with which the thundering waters and luxuriant vegetation combine to create a truly bewitching spectacle – the magnificent Ouzoud Waterfall, one of the most



The Ouzoud waterfalls



remarkable natural attractions in the Middle Atlas! Its cold waters are ideal for a refreshing bathe, and its surroundings provide plenty of scope for rambling through unspoilt countryside inhabited by monkeys and a wealth of birdlife.

The Middle Atlas

The Middle Atlas range stretches for 350 km between the Rif and the High Atlas. Its great biodiversity, and its springs, superb lakes and delightful little villages make it a paradise for nature lovers and those in search of new worlds – a wonderland of age-old cedar woods, cherry groves, orchards and vineyards, easily accessible to one and all, and one of the Kingdom's most rewarding regions to explore.

Curiosity

The Middle Atlas Mountains present many features of geological and morphological interest, but it is their lakes above all that make them so remarkable. Making the tour is an unmissable experience, taking you through wild mountain landscapes, high green plateaus, and vast stretches of forestland alive with Barbary apes. Most Middle Atlas lakes are to be found in the region around Beni Mellal, Khenifra, and Ifrane.

Leaving the town of Ifrane, you drive 17 km along the Immouzzar Kandar road, and then turn right on to the lakes road. Morocco's most famous lake is undoubtedly Dait Aoua, followed by Aguelmame Azegza, which is the Berber for "green lake", and Aguelmame Sidi Ali (just to mention a couple of the largest). In the Oum Rabia Valley, the springs of the same name form waterfalls, gushing down the limestone cliff faces. Regular in flow and alive with trout, they join up with Oued Fellat and Oued Oum Rbia to form Morocco's longest river, which goes on to make its arduous journey to Azemmour on the Atlantic coast.



Immouzer Ida Outanane. Even in the remotest villages, Moroccan hospitality is a tradition that never dies.



Fortified granaries in the Agadir region

The Anti-Atlas

The Anti-Atlas Mountains form a junction between the High Atlas and the Sahara, their peaks reaching between 2000 and 3300 metres above sea level, and overlooking the oases of the Draa and Dades Valleys. Organised treks around the magnificent Djbel Saghro and the Siroua volcanic massif alternate vast stretches of desert with deep shady valleys. The region's Berber villages are an altogether wonderful experience, both for their beauty and for the warm welcome you will receive from their inhabitants.

Curiosity

Their fortified granaries (known as "agadir" or "ighrem"), are the villagers' common property, and were used to store

food reserves and protect them from the ravages of pillagers. In bygone days, when danger threatened, women and children sought refuge within their walls. Many of these fortress-granaries have been magnificently conserved, and you can visit one such fifty or so kilometres from Agadir. They are typical of Berber villages, built on the slopes with only a single door on their surrounding stone walls. Inside, on each of the three or four floors, a series of separate compartments runs off a central passageway. Their little wooden doors are not aligned horizontally, one above the other, but rather in diagonal fashion, and you get to the upper storeys by climbing up the flat stones jutting from the wall.

The riches of the Atlas



When you're in the Atlas forests, take the time to make the acquaintance of the Barbary apes – playful creatures, and greedy too!

Over 4000 spontaneous species exist in Morocco, including the superb marsh orchids which grow in the heights of the Atlas Mountains.

That most majestic of cedar trees, the Atlas cedar, grows only in Morocco and often reaches heights of 40 metres and more, its fragrant and highly resistant wood much prized by cabinetmakers. It is also known for its longevity: the famous Gouraud Cedar in the Middle Atlas is over eight centuries old!

The internationally protected royal eagle, with its dark plumage and golden crest, makes its permanent home in Morocco. Don't forget to bring along your binoculars!



The Atlas cedar – a majestic tree endemic to Morocco

The Barbary apes of the Middle Atlas are the only species of macaque to be found on the African continent, living mostly in the cedar groves of the Middle Atlas and the forests of the High Atlas.

With fully equipped resorts in the Middle Atlas, at Michlifen near Ifrane and at Jbel Hebri, and in the High Atlas, at Oukaïmeden, skiing enthusiasts can have the time of their lives throughout the winter season. It's also possible to combine a bracing climb up the M'Goun Massif with a descent of the same on skis when there's enough snow on the ground. Whatever the season, all three Atlas massifs are ideal destinations for rambblers and climbers – and, in spring, for rafting enthusiasts as well.



Almond trees in bloom at the feet of the Anti-Atlas

The Rif Mountains, timeless and authentic

A range with its feet in the water

With their undulating relief and luxuriant green slopes, dotted with almond trees and plunging directly into the shimmering waters of the Mediterranean, the Rif Mountains have a charm all of their own. Here, only man and mule can reach some of the douars nestling in their hollows. And although their peaks may be of no great height, they offer the explorer a wealth of wonders to discover – waterfalls, isolated creeks, flower-filled gardens, pine and cedar forests, and views to take your breath away... All the joys of walking and climbing combined with the joys of bathing on sun-drenched beaches and of discovering towns and villages of spell-binding beauty, such as Chefchaouen, Al Hoceima and Cala Iris, or the little fishing ports of Mdiq, Jebha, Oued Laou and Ras el Ma.



Unspoilt and authentic, the Rif is a region of delightful little villages and magnificent natural landscapes

Chefchaouen, an uncut diamond

Remote from the world at large, Chefchaouen, with its old medina

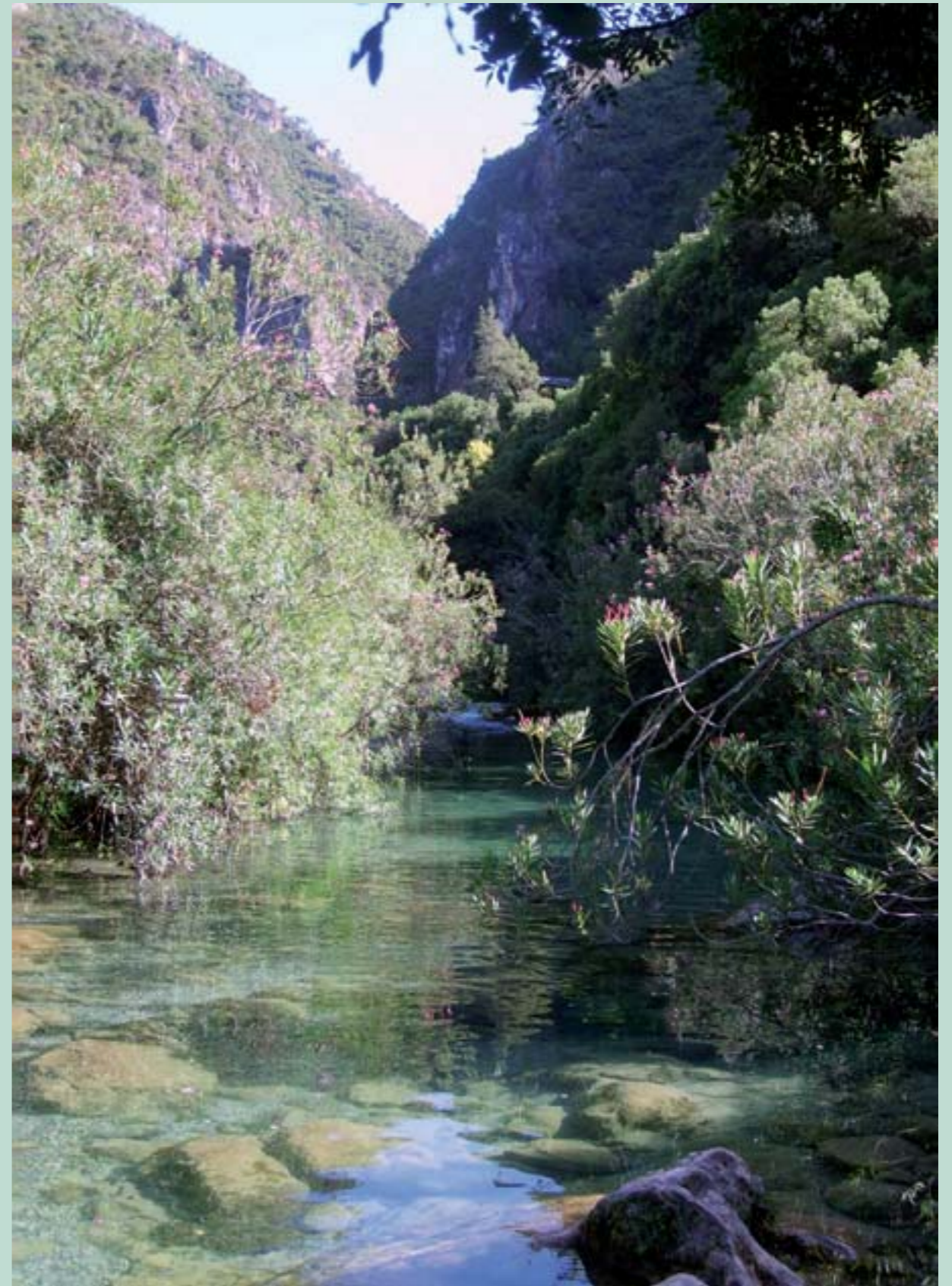
of white and blue houses, is a model of authenticity. Founded in the 15th century by Arabs fleeing from Spain, the town was long forbidden to Christians. Its remarkable religious heritage includes no less than 20 mosques, 11 zaouias and 17 mausoleums. The old fortified city standing above the town is marvellously preserved, as its streets are too narrow for cars. A wide range of mountain treks are on offer with this picturesque little spot as a starting point.

Curiosity

The “Bridge of God” is a natural work of art, a majestic rock arch, 25 metres high, spanning the Oued Farda, just a few kilometres from Chefchaouen in the Talassemtane Nature Park. You get to it along a steep, well signposted mountain road which then takes you on to a waterfall where you can enjoy a refreshing bathe in pure, icy cold waters.



A street in Chefchaouen



The Bridge of God – a natural work of art

The riches of the Rif



Endangered species such as the royal eagle are protected in the Rif Mountains, living and reproducing there to the delight of visitors to the region

The **carob tree** grows mainly in the Rif Mountains, and can live for up to five hundred years. Its fruit is used in the food industry, for making ice-cream and pastries.

In Morocco, the **almond tree** is second only to the olive tree. Over 16 million almond trees grow in the Kingdom, the largest numbers in the Al Hoceima region.

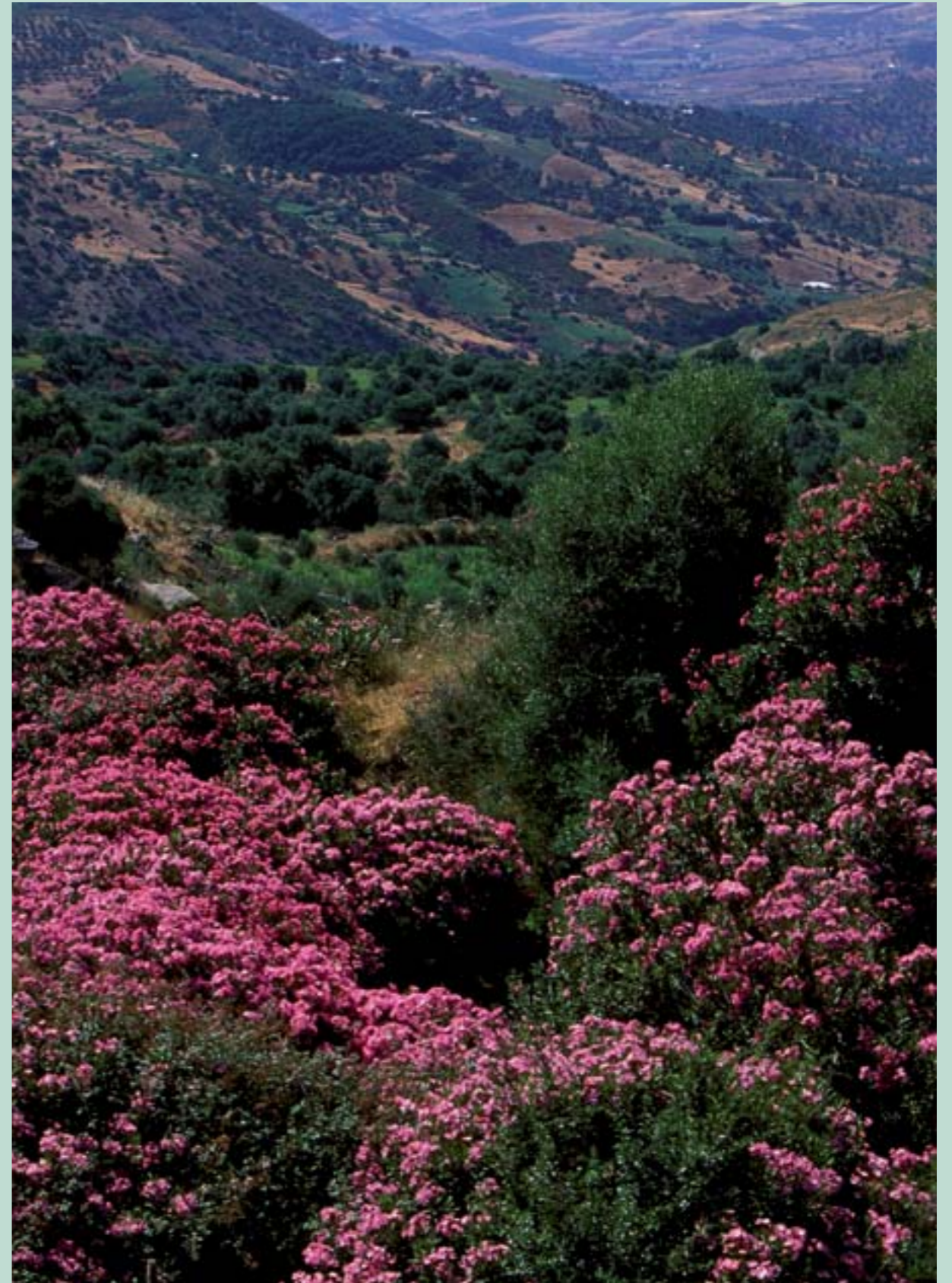
Fig trees are mostly to be found in the Taounate region near Al Hoceima and Chefchaouen. Their fruit is much appreciated, especially when dried.

Fir trees cover over 3500 hectares of the Chefchaouen region, which is the largest reserve in the Kingdom. The same is true of the **cedar tree**, which

requires plenty of light and water, and which forms vast forests in the Rif massif at altitudes of over 1500 metres. **Green oaks** and **pine trees** grow at the feet of the slopes.

The Rif region is particularly popular with hunters, as it is home to a wide variety of game, including **wild boar**, **foxes**, **partridges**, **hares** and **rabbits**. Other species definitely not for hunting also live there peacefully, such as **royal eagles**, **booted eagles**, **Barbary apes**, **mountain goats** and **gazelles**.

A fine selection of wood mushrooms is there for the picking in wet, tree-shaded areas, the most sought after being the **chanterelle**, the **cep**, the **morel** and the **trompe-de-mort**.



The steep valleys are sometimes difficult to get to, but are always filled with flowers and offer shade to the weary traveller

The draw of the desert



Land of adventure, the Moroccan desert preserves its age-old traditions and way of life

Leave the stresses and strains of everyday life far behind you and set off in discovery of your true self, at one with nature and living life in the footsteps of the Blue Men, on camelback, on foot, by four-wheel drive or by quad. Leave the comfort of your armchair for a few days and treat yourself to an experience you will never forget – a real human adventure!

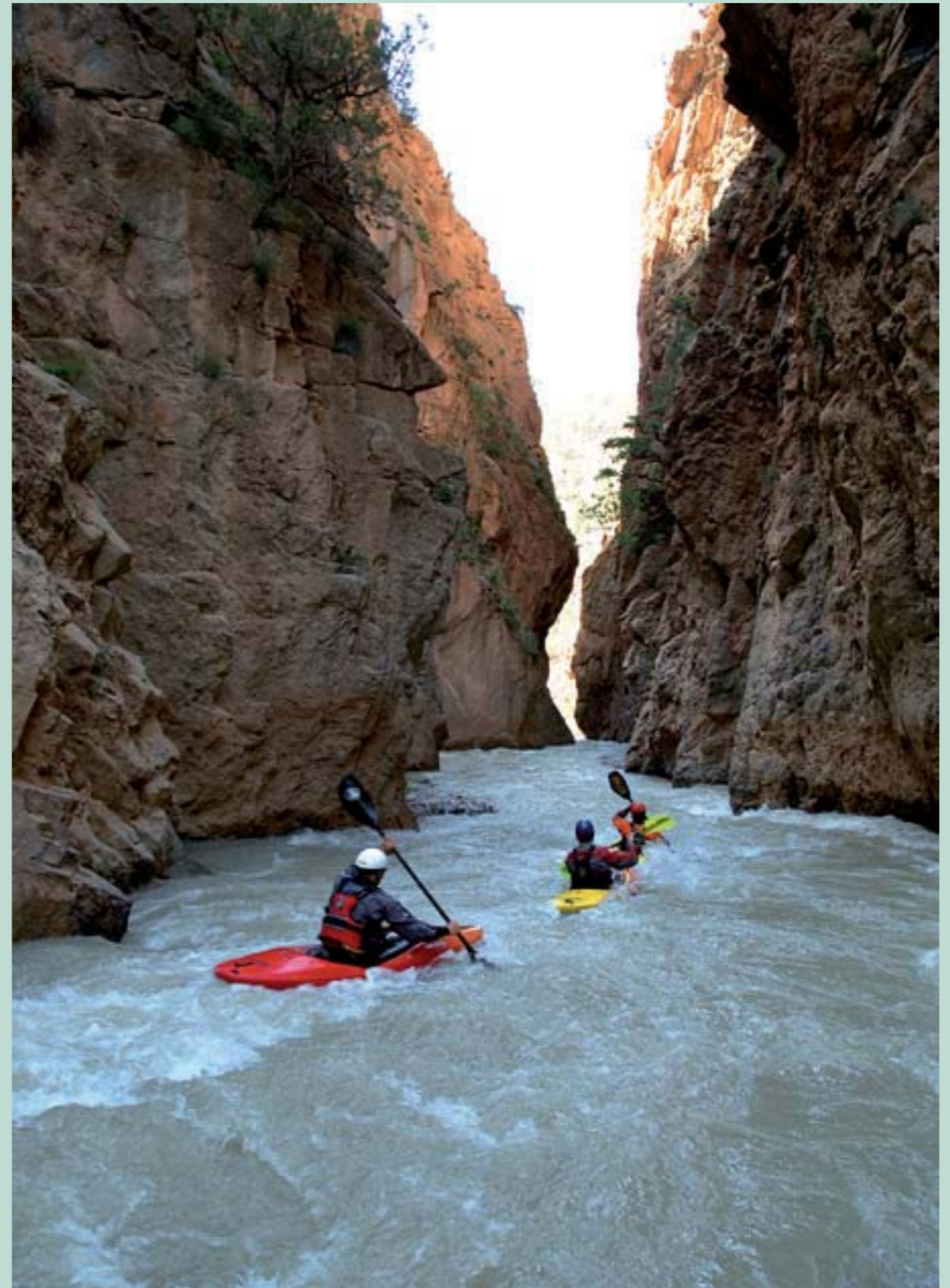
There is nothing like a stay in the desert if you really want a change of scenery. And south of the Atlas Mountains, the world's largest desert, the Sahara, awaits you. River valleys, tiny villages, oases, and the great dunes of the ergs – the Moroccan desert is everything except monotonous!



We recommend that you take a guide along with you. He will be specially trained to lead expeditions into these mystery-laden landscapes, and, knowing where the most spectacular views are to be found and the customs and traditions of the peoples who live there, will help you discover the full wonder of this magical world.

The desert is within your reach!

But here again, trust the official guides, who will give you all the information you need with regard to practicalities, types of accommodation, and what will be required of you in physical terms.



Rafting and canyoning are very popular sports in the gorges of the Moroccan Deep South

Living the Touareg life



Every year, the village of Kelaat Megouna celebrates the rose harvest

Alone in the dunes

A range of treks is on offer at the gateway to the desert. Complemented by visits to local cooperatives, improvised concerts around campfires and the discovery of local dishes, they are suitable for all ages and aptitudes. If you want to venture a little further, camelback excursions follow in the footsteps of the Touaregs, the Blue Men of the desert. There is no lack of magical sights to see, and in the course of a single day you can travel through such luxuriant landscapes as the oasis of Skoura and come face to face with the great golden sand dunes of Merzouga.

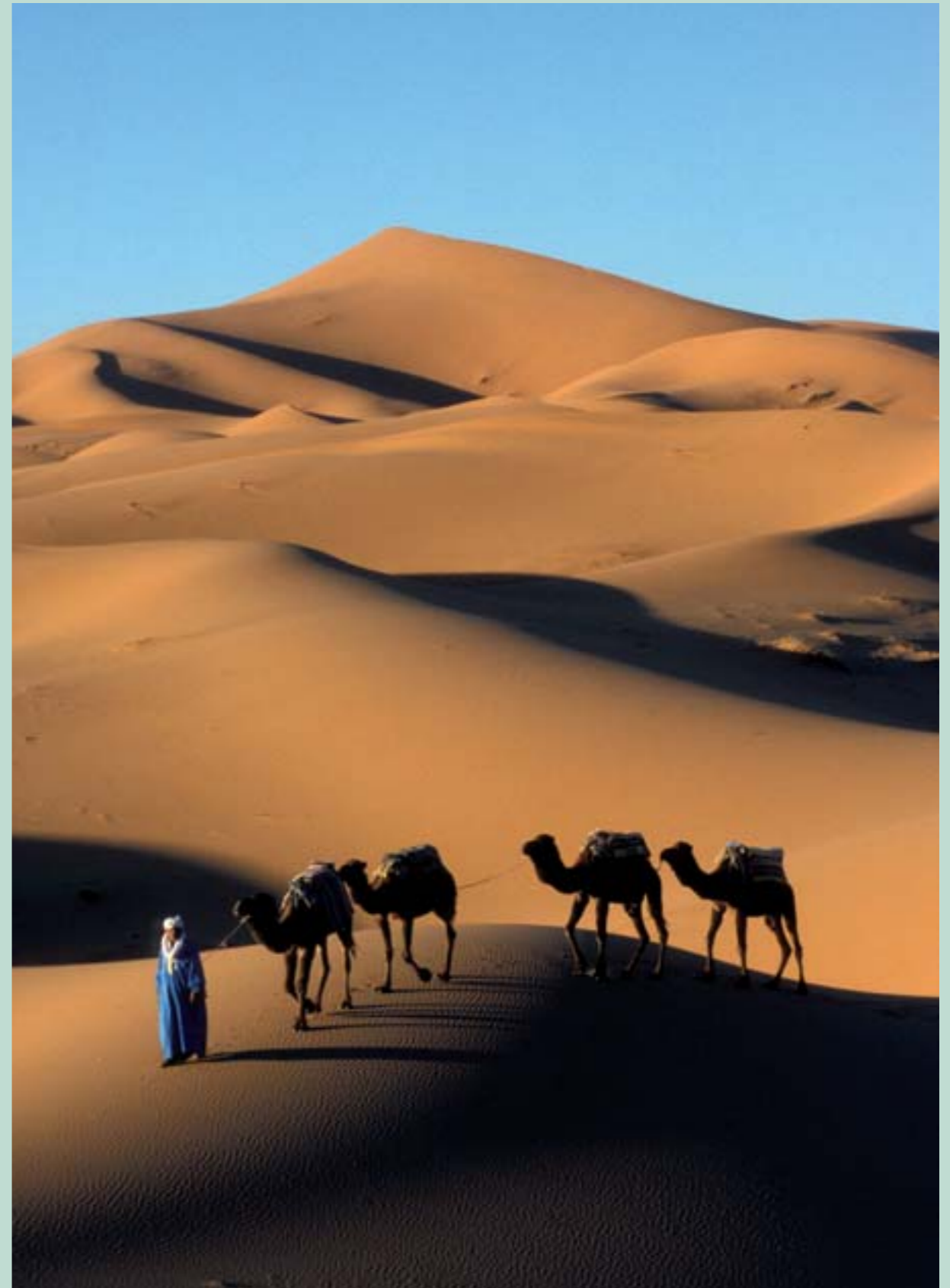
On the oasis trail

Whether you leave from Marrakech or from Ouarzazate, four-wheel drive

tours will take you through some of the most breath-taking scenery in the deep south. The road of a thousand Kasbahs, the Draa and Dades Valleys, the Valley of Roses, M'hmud El Ghislane, Erfoud, the Chegaga dunes, Figuig – itineraries leading you wonderstruck from valley to erg and from gorge to oasis.

A thousand and one stars

Bivouacking in the desert and witnessing the sun rising and setting over the dunes is an unforgettable experience indeed! Out here, the night sky is inky black, and you can see the stars as you can nowhere else. Nomad camps can be mobile or fixed, for yet greater comfort.



Crossing the golden dunes on camelback takes you back to the days of the caravanserais

The riches of the desert



Erfoud's fossils bear witness to the days when the region lay underwater

Erfoud's fossil stones are over 360,000 years old, and are one of the unique features of the Moroccan Deep South. Local craftsmen sculpt them to create everything from simple pendants to finely worked fountain basins.

The Moroccan Deep South, land of a thousand palm groves, is the kingdom of the date. Those around Erfoud, a little town in the heart of the Tafilalet region, where some 800,000 date palms grow, are famed throughout the world, thanks to the annual October moussem held there to celebrate the harvesting of this "gold of the desert".

The dromedary makes an ideal companion on any journey into the desert. It is resistant to high temperatures, and can walk in the sand without sinking in – despite its 700 kilos! Its single hump is composed of fat, serving the animal well as an energy reserve.

In the early 1960s, the nomadic tribes of the Moroccan South, who had the habit of coming together once a year in Tan-Tan, decided to turn their annual meeting into a moussem. Since that time, it has become a major festival and an occasion for cultural, economic, and social



The Marathon des Sables is a unique sporting event, bringing together the finest and most steadfast runners every year



exchange, taking place over a week in the month of September. The Tan-Tan Moussem celebrates traditional forms of entertainment and music, and a wide selection of craftwork is on sale there – along with camels, naturally! In 2005, in order to preserve the authentic nature of this remarkable event, UNESCO listed it as a Masterpiece of World Oral and cultural Heritage.

Taking the desert at a run? It may sound crazy, but that's exactly what participants in the Marathon des Sables attempt on a yearly basis in the Moroccan Deep South, with temperatures running as high as 50° and over! Runners must carry their own food and cover a distance of around 240 km in six days. For seasoned athletes only!

A dip in the Big Blue

Bathing, yachting, diving, or simply lazing away the day – the calm warm waters of the Mediterranean Sea are as ideal for all manner of water sports as they are for relaxing by and getting yourself back on form.

Located 50 km from Tétouan, set between river and sea beside a beach at the mouth of the oued whose name it bears, Oued Laou is a little village famous for its pottery. It makes an ideal departure point for visits to the gorges and waterfalls of Oued Laou, and to the Talassemtane National Park in the Rif Mountains.

A little fishing port clinging to the mountain slopes and beyond the reach of passing time, the village of El Jebha lives to the rhythm of the boats that come and go. Here, the men fish by lantern, catching the fish that swim into the light. Nature has been bountiful here, endowing the area with

unspoilt beaches, creeks and caves, and sculpting an impressive cirque in the limestone alongside the sea. Keep an eye on the shore here – you may well be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the dolphins at play...

Looking down from its cliff top, Al Hoceima keeps watch over an immense nature park. Here, you can laze away the day or set off to explore as you like – it's an ideal spot for either pastime! The town overlooks a bay fringed with unspoilt beaches and rocky inlets. Fine golden sands, shimmering blue seas, and cloudless skies add their magic to such bewitching landscapes as the high cliffs of the mountainous hinterland formed by the Bokkoya massif. Al Hoceima's crystal clear waters harbour a rich variety of marine life, including several species of dolphins. And as you explore the neighbouring coastline, you'll also come across your fair share of flamingos and green woodpeckers...



Turquoise waters and year-round sunshine – the Mediterranean Sea never fails to keep its promises



The burgeoning marine life in the creeks of Northern Morocco makes for some first-rate fishing expeditions

The discreet charm of the North Atlantic



The Merja Zerga Nature Reserve is a refuge for migrating birds

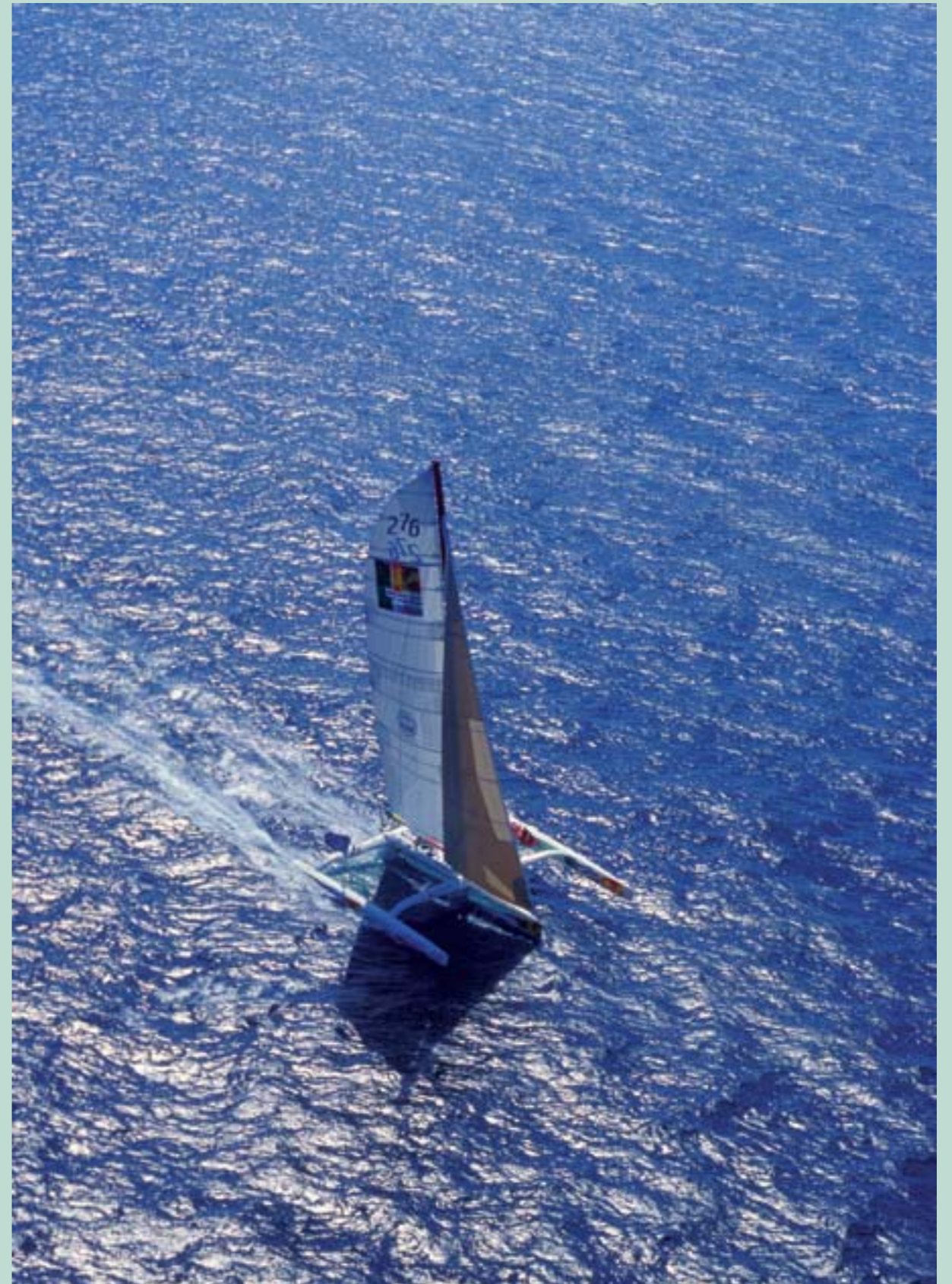
Lagoons, fishing villages and traditional port towns – from Tangier to Safi, the Atlantic coast boasts a wealth of unspoilt treasures remote from the Kingdom's major seaside resorts. Here, tranquillity and serenity are the order of the day.

Located halfway between Tangier and Rabat, the town of Moulay Bousselham boasts a magnificent lagoon surrounded by fine white sand. With dunes standing as high as 50 metres, the coastline lends itself perfectly to the joys of hang-gliding, and is also ideal for windsurfing, 4-wheel drive or quad trekking, and expeditions out to sea, either for a spot of diving or a round or two of sports fishing. Not far off, the Merja Zerga Nature Reserve is a paradise for migrating birds.



A peaceful little town set between river and ocean 70 km South of Casablanca, Azemmour is a perfect destination for anyone looking for a bit of peace, a quiet bathe, or a leisurely ramble along the banks of the Oum er Rabia river or the golden sands of El Haouzia beach.

A lagoon sheltered from the wind, a perfect cove of a beach, and oysters renowned by gourmets the world over – Oualidia has it all, a unique spot where nature is at its most bounteous and bewitching, and where calm and serenity have real meaning. Situated halfway between Casablanca and Essaouira, the town is a favoured destination for waterskiers, surfboarders, jetskiers, windsurfers and diving enthusiasts.



The Moroccan coastline is ideal for all types of water sports, and amateurs and professionals alike are spoilt for choice!

The South Atlantic, from trade winds to sea breezes



Skysurfing, bodyboarding, surfboarding, windsurfing and funboarding – every board sport imaginable is yours to enjoy on the paradisiacal beaches along Morocco's southern coastline

A wild coastline, sometimes adorned with fine sandy beaches, sometimes bordered by towering white cliffs, the shores of the South Atlantic see desert and ocean join forces in an endless succession of perfect surfing spots, each with its own unique character and its own special waves to conquer, and each offering board sports enthusiasts everything they could wish for.

A surfer's paradise!

Thousands of birds – some, like the famous bald ibis, in danger of extinction – peacefully share the shoreline with surfers come from all corners of the globe. All type of water sports are practised here, and there is no lack of clubs offering introductory lessons in windsurfing, waterskiing,

surfdiving, kitesurfing, and sea scootering. The coast is also a great place to explore on horseback, by mountain bike or – and why not indeed? – On camelback.

Safi has its face turned resolutely seawards – but it is above all its famous wave, a byword in the surfing world, that draws board-sports enthusiasts from every continent. Regular, rapid, and powerful, the Safi wave is celebrated for its ability to form a tube varying from 800 to 1000 metres in length. Professionals compare it to its South African and Australian rivals, and include it in the world's top ten surf spots. The setting and excellent wind conditions also attract wind and kitesurfing adepts.



Giddy cliff tops and shimmering white dunes – Taghazout's beach is famed for its beauty and, of course, for its wave



Essaouira: Whether you're a board sports professional or simply an enthusiastic amateur, Essaouira bay has soft golden sands awaiting you, along with eternal sunshine and, above all, wind – for this is a town where the trade winds blow. Natural surroundings as yet untamed, a wide variety of point breaks, reef breaks and beach breaks, and the human, spiritual and cultural richness of a region redolent with beauty and energy – all combine to make Essaouira the legendary surf spot that it is.

Taghazout is the surfing village par excellence. Long straight waves and challenging beach breaks alternate along

this stretch of coastline, an unmissable destination for surfers of all levels, from beginners to old hands. The "Killer Point" wave owes its name to the killer whales that are sometimes to be seen in the area. And after a good day's surfing, you couldn't do better than pay a visit to the "banana village" where they make the best tajines to be found anywhere in the South of Morocco.

Further south, 120 km from Agadir, the little village of Mirleft attracts fishing enthusiasts and surfers alike. Its beaches are overlooked by cliffs whose giddy heights offer breath-taking views to any surfers or bodyboarders who care to climb them.

In search of the perfect wave



Tarfaya, formerly known as Cape Juby, was one of the stopovers for the Casablanca-Dakar airmail service

Tan-Tan's legendary White Beach is a stretch of fine virgin sand running for almost 50 kilometres alongside an ocean where tiers of great waves thunder head-on shorewards. Set in the midst of the dunes, this remote corner of paradise also includes the Khenifiss National Park, an ornithological reserve where cormorants and flamingos make their homes, the brilliant colouring of the flamingos' plumage in stunning contrast to the blue of the skies reflected in the river's waters. Finally, Oued Chbika is rapidly developing as a surf spot, and is equipped with all the infrastructures required to ensure comfortable accommodation for the many board sports enthusiasts who come to stay in the region.

When you leave Tan-Tan, take the time to stop off at the "Devil's Hole,"

a remarkable rocky abyss over 30 metres across and in depth, into which the ocean surges through a natural underground gallery.

Further south, the Nayla Lagoon is a superb spot harbouring a wealth of marine life, and is much frequented by surfers and fishing fans alike. Cut off from the ocean by a long cordon of sand dunes, the lagoon makes an ideal playground for surfboarders, windsurfers, and bodyboarders of all levels.

An excellent spot for fishing, as is clear from the wrecks out to sea – evidence of the violence of past storms – Tarfaya, the former Cape Juby, was one of the stopovers of the Casablanca-Dakar airmail service in Protectorate days. The town has been made famous by the literary works of Saint-Exupéry,



Dakhla's lagoon: wild deserted beaches succeed one another to form a vast playground for the surfing world



perhaps the best known of the service's pilots, and contains a small museum dedicated to his memory.

Between Tarfaya and Laayoune, you can visit a series of picturesque little fishing villages. All kinds of fish and seafood abound in the waters here, the most prized catches being lobsters and crayfish.

Dakhla's beaches are a dream come true – sun-drenched fragments of heaven, where the sea takes on a myriad colours from emerald blue to shimmering

turquoise, subtly reflected from its inky depths and crystal clear shallows.

The 40-kilometre long peninsula makes a tranquil haven for migrating birds, and is ideal for surfboarding, with perfect long straight waves and equally constant winds that also make it a paradise for windsurfers and kitesurfers. The ocean is rich in marine life – fishing is the queen of sports here, either surf casting or in bulk, and divers will find a wealth of unspoilt wonders to explore beneath the surface.

A land blessed by nature



The Taфраout region

Morocco numbers at least forty different ecosystems and thousands of species of animal and plant life, and has developed over 140 protected areas in order to preserve this remarkable and varied natural heritage.

The Al Hoceima National Park on the Mediterranean boasts a wild rocky coastline of startling beauty, and is home to multitudes of seabirds.

The Toubkal National Park in the heights of the High Atlas is a giddy succession of cliffs, lakes and forests, taking on fresh colours with each new season. It covers some 38,000 hectares, its vast green oak and thuja forests alternating with plateaus and steep gorges through which crystal rivers flow. The wild landscapes

are roamed by moufflon sheep and their skies haunted by such stately birds of prey as royal eagles, booted eagles and Bonelli's eagles.

Ifrane National Park, in the Middle Atlas, has deservedly been named the "park of lakes." It stretches for over 500 km, a wonderland of springs and lakes that also harbours Morocco's largest cedar forest. Here, some of the Kingdom's best known springs await your discovery – Vittel, Dait Aoua, Dait Hachlaf, Dait Ifrah, and Afourgah

Still in the Middle Atlas, but a little further North, Tazekka National Park, with its many waterfalls and caves, provides visitors with a very different side of nature. Its highest



The Souss Massa Nature Reserve



point, Jbel Tazekka, stand 2000 metres above sea level, and offers breath-taking views of the magnificent surrounding countryside. Forests of cork oaks, cedar trees, and tree ferns make this an ideal home for the Barbary deer that inhabit the region. Guided tours of the park are available.

Further South, in the Agadir region, the Souss Massa National Park harbours a wide variety of bird species, some – like the bald ibis – threatened with extinction, along with reptiles and butterflies. It is here that Morocco has recently been trying to reintroduce a

number of animal species that have all but disappeared, including the Dama Mhorr gazelle, the Oryx and the Addax.

Talassemtane Nature Park in the Western Rif covers over 60,000 hectares, with magnificent mountainous massifs and great cliffs plunging down to the Mediterranean coastline. The park is planted with Moroccan firs, black pines and Atlas cedars, and also boasts a wide variety of fauna, including macaques, lynxes, otters, grass snakes, terrapins and many species of birds of prey.

Local produce at its finest



Orange blossom, natural Moroccan produce to be found in kitchens and cosmetics alike

Make your stay an opportunity to discover the many and varied riches of Morocco's terroirs. Fruits and vegetables here are nothing less than divine! No artifice required – the souks are filled with what nature does best on its own: fragrant oranges ripened to perfection in the sun, red onions that go exquisitely with a fine tomato salad or extra-virgin olive oil from Meknes, regarded as one of the finest varieties anywhere in the world!

Make yourself a refreshing fruit juice after a day's sunbathing on the beach, or a colourful light salad to tickle the taste buds of gourmets great and small alike.

Almonds: Moroccan cooks know a thousand and one ways to make the utmost of the almond. It is a real "fruit of honour" here, a delicacy to be savoured on festive occasions. Offered to guests as a beverage, in pastries or simply grilled, it symbolises health, happiness, and good fortune. In Moroccan haute cuisine, it makes its appearance in such



refined preparations as pastilla, sweet-and-savoury tajines, gazelle's horns, and stuffed dates.

Argan oil: Long known for its medicinal properties – it helps to lower cholesterol and boosts the body's natural defences – argan oil, with its subtle underlying fruitiness and delicate orangy yellow colour, can also be used to season raw vegetables and mixed salads. It is at its best as a final touch to grilled fish, poultry, or fried vegetables. Amlou, a spread made from argan oil, honey and crushed almonds, is one of the treasures of the Agadir terroir, and is a first-rate tonic food to be enjoyed at breakfast or as a snack.

Olive oil: Olive oil has reigned over Moroccan kitchens since time immemorial. The olive tree, with its deep roots and knotty trunk, has silvery-backed leaves that tremble with the slightest breeze, and is a regular feature of the Kingdom's Mediterranean



Morocco's many varieties of honeys are all naturally produced from the Kingdom's rich and varied flora. Spurge honey from Beni Mellal, thyme honey from the Ant-Atlas, orange blossom honey from the Gharb region – the list is endless!



landscapes – a blessed tree, its branches symbolising peace. Its fruit soak up the summer heat to deliver plump olives, bursting with sunshine, as autumn comes around. What greater pleasure at breakfast time than to dip a piece of soft bread in their oil and enjoy it alongside a glass of tea flavoured with freshly picked mint? A real treat!

Honey: Rif, Souss, or Atlas – wherever you are in Morocco, you'll find a local variety of honey. The much prized nectar is used to make pastries as well as being an ingredient in traditional recipes designed to

enhance feminine beauty. The best known varieties are honeys made from thyme, spurge, eucalyptus, lavender and orange blossom. Almond honey, with its clear texture, delicious flavour, and heady fragrance, is also much sought after.

As precious as they are fragile, the blue flowers of Talioune in the Anti-Atlas are gathered by hand before dawn. When dried, their stigmas produce saffron. At least 150,000 flowers are needed for a single kilo – which, not surprisingly, makes it the world's most expensive spice.

Information and useful addresses



Practical advice:

If you plan to go trekking in the mountains or the desert, you need to be well prepared and properly equipped. There may be snow in the high mountains even in summertime – bring along a good pair of walking shoes suitable for such expeditions, and a first aid kit as well. In summer, walkers must take care to keep themselves well hydrated. The best way to travel safely is to set off in the company of a professional guide, who will not only take you along the prettiest routes, but will also advise you on what clothing and shoes to wear.

Entry formalities

A valid passport for a stay of less than 90 days is required. 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 bringing your pet along with you, however, you will need to bring along its vaccination booklet.

Changing money

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

www.oc.gov.ma

Time zone:

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

Climate

Morocco enjoys a temperate climate, thanks to its Atlantic and Mediterranean exposure and the shelter provided by the Rif and Atlas Mountain ranges.

Language

Classical Arabic is the official language, but Moroccan dialectal Arabic is spoken for everyday purposes, as is Tamazight (Berber), spoken in the Rif, the Atlas and the Souss, and varying from region to region. The most common foreign language spoken is French, followed by Spanish and English.

Weather forecast: www.meteoma.net

Electricity: 220 volts

Emergency phone numbers:

Police 19

Fire Brigade 150

Directory enquiries 160

Road safety services 177

Rail network: Express trains are fast, comfortable and air-conditioned.

Moroccan railways: www.oncf.ma

Call Centre : 08 90 20 30 40

Air transport network

Air transport is provided by “Royal Air Maroc”, “Jet4You”, Atlas Blue, Easyjet, Ryanair, Thomson Fly and Aer lingus as well as by major international airlines. Morocco has 27 airports, 14 of which are international (Casablanca, Tangier, Rabat, Laayoune, Agadir, Marrakech, Oujda, Fez, Al Hoceima, Ouarzazate, Essaouira, Tetouan, Errachidia and Nador).

Call Centre : 08 90 000 800

Port network

Morocco currently has 30 ports making up a comprehensive network. Passenger traffic is mostly handled by the port of Tangier on the Straits of Gibraltar and Nador on the Northern coast.

Road network

60,000 km of roads, 60% of them surfaced and categorised as follows: main roads, secondary roads, tertiary roads, expressways, and motorways, the latter linking Casablanca, Rabat, Meknes, Fez-Casablanca, Rabat, Kenitra, Larache, Tangier-Casa, Marrakech, Chichaoua-Tangier, and Fnideq. Two further stretches, Casablanca-Agadir and Casablanca-Oujda are currently under construction.

Useful websites for rural tourism:

www.tourismerurale.ma

For further information:

www.visitmorocco.com



MOROCCAN NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE

WWW.VISITMOROCCO.COM