Your guide to off-the-beaten-path sustainable travel and shopping

Morocco
Morocco has long captured the imagination of travellers, boasting a dazzling array of commanding mountain views, idyllic beach getaways and bustling ancient souqs (markets). Tourists come in droves to find delicious tajine (traditional stew), refreshing mint tea and eye-catching architecture adorned with colorful mosaics. Morocco’s smooth tourism sector and exemplary safety record make it an ideal gateway to the Middle East and North Africa region.

This guide will help you travel beyond the standard tourist attractions, and gain a deeper understanding of Morocco and the innovative entrepreneurs who call it home. Have a different kind of experience on this trip — one that is as responsible and environmentally-conscious as it is fun.
Planning a trip can be overwhelming, so we kept this guide simple. It is separated into four sections:

— THE FOUR SECTIONS YOU WILL FIND:

WHERE TO STAY | WHERE TO EAT | WHAT TO DO | WHAT TO BRING HOME

We have also created a Google Map featuring each location mentioned, and underlined text can be clicked to access relevant websites.

Each section features the projects and creations of our Morocco-based Switchers — the green entrepreneurs who are creating circular, sustainable economies to benefit their country and beyond.

Whether you are traveling for business or work, we hope you discover something new and inspiring through the Switchers highlighted in this guide.

Happy travels!
The Switchers
2.1 million visitors
attracted by Morocco’s number one drawcard - Marrakech’s beguiling souqs and breathtaking architecture

5.1 million foreigners
visited Morocco in 2016

8.1% of gross domestic product
was attributed to the tourism sector in 2016, along with 7.1% of employment figures
Where to Stay

Our four-day itinerary below proposes a convenient trip focused around Marrakech, so here we have included more out-of-the-way places to stay if you have more time. Our Switchers offer a diversity of accommodation types for any budget and travel style. Leave your laptops and smartphones at home — these sustainable accommodations are the prime spot for a digital detox.
– TERRES D’AMANAR
Terres d’Amanar
Tahanaout

— PERFECT FOR
Adventure tourism in a picturesque and eco-friendly setting.

Terres d’Amanar fits so seamlessly into its surrounding environment — the towering Atlas Mountains of Morocco — that you will need to look closely to spot the ecolodge, camouflaged as it is amongst the red and brown hills. Guests can go horse riding, mountain biking and treetop walking if they choose, or enjoy Amazigh (Berber) food and handicrafts at a slower pace. Each activity employs members of the local community, which helped Terres d’Amanar win the 2011 Morocco Trophy for Responsible Tourism.

— ACCOMMODATION
Guests can select between staying in the luxurious ecolodge or the more rustic tent lodge, both of which have distinct advantages. Ecolodge (Comfort) and Ecolodge (Suite) offer rooms of varying sizes, each appointed with traditional furnishings and access to indoor bathrooms. Tent Lodge guests stay in permanent, Berber-inspired tents outside the main building.

Check the website for up-to-date prices, which tend to range from MAD 330 to 550 per person, per night.

— GETTING THERE
From Marrakech, you can cover the 36-kilometer journey to Terres d’Amanar by car. Alternatively, take public bus 35 and get off at the end of the line. You will enjoy a 30-minute walk through breathtaking landscape before reaching the ecolodge.

— HOW TO BOOK
Call reception or book through the Terres d’Amanar website.

+212 524 438 103
Terres d’Amanar Website

Read the Story on Switchers
— PERFECT FOR

Doing yoga in a Berber fortress. Have any of your friends done that yet?

You read correctly: **Atlas Kasbah Ecolodge** allows guests to chill out with a yoga session behind ancient Berber fortifications. Integrating past and present should come as no surprise given the lodge’s founder, Hassan Aboutayeb, has a PhD in sustainable development. Visitors can enjoy pampering at on-site hammam and henna tattoo facilities, taking a Moroccan cooking class, and tackling surf and mountain-based adventure activities.

— ACCOMMODATION

There are nine rooms and three spacious suites, all of which come with ensuite bathrooms and opulent Berber decoration. Prices start from around MAD 800 per night.

Of course, the castle setting adds to the ambience of the ecolodge, which boasts a swimming pool and restaurant offering a new, carefully curated menu each day.

— GETTING THERE

Most visitors fly to Agadir and then take a short 20-25 minute taxi ride to Atlas Kasbah from either the airport or downtown.

— HOW TO BOOK

+212 661 488 504 or +212 662 188 889

Atlas Kasbah Ecolodge website

Read the Story on Switchers
Djebl Club
Moqrisset

— PERFECT FOR
Skilled travellers who want to leave behind as much as they receive.

You have probably never stayed in accommodation quite like **Djebl Club**, a sustainable tourism initiative where guests pay in knowledge, not money. Allae Hammouri brings talented outsiders — including you — to his rural community, where work opportunities can be limited. Guests can enjoy peaceful mountain passes and meaningful cultural experiences while teaching locals useful skills. As Hammouri says: “Then, the people of the region gain that knowledge so they don’t always have to stay unemployed.”

— ACCOMMODATION
Each guest gets a simple room at Djebl Club in exchange for spending 2-3 hours per day running classes on their chosen specialty. This could be anything, from marketing to web design to street art. The nightly rate begins and ends at an attractive MAD 0.00 per night.

— GETTING THERE
You can take a one-hour taxi from nearby Ouazzane or Chefchaouen.

— HOW TO BOOK
+212 609 577 546
Djebl Club Facebook page

Read the Story on Switchers
– ECO-AUBERGE LE FESTIVAL, TINGHIR
Eco-Auberge Le Festival
Tinghir

— PERFECT FOR
Switching off from the outside world in the picturesque mountain countryside.

Around 400 kilometers due east from Marrakech is Eco-Auberge Le Festival, a soothing eco-lodge tucked away in the Atlas Mountains. Guests can take advantage of the premier hiking and mountain climbing opportunities nearby, before returning home to relax in a bio-pool and enjoy the delicious Moroccan moussaka on offer at the restaurant. The lodge runs on sustainable principles, drawing upon solar energy, artesian wells and an organic vegetable garden.

— ACCOMMODATION
Seven rooms are available: two in a tower-like building, while the remainder are inside ancient caves. In particular, the cave lodgings offer a unique experience, allowing guests to live like Morocco’s distant ancestors (with natural air-conditioning, for example) but with the luxuries of modern life as well. All rooms start from around MAD 600 per night.

— GETTING THERE
You can take a bus or shared taxi from Marrakech to Tinghir, also known as Tinerhir, which should take around 7-8 hours. Alternatively, you could ride a 5 hour bus from Merzouga.

— HOW TO BOOK
+212 661 267 251 or +212 673 454 307
aubergelefestival@yahoo.fr

S Read the Story on Switchers
What to Bring Home

Why buy standard souvenirs when Morocco is home to so many creative green entrepreneurs? Our Switchers have taken their creative eye for design and applied it to upcycle and transform waste into unique products that benefit local artisans and community groups across the country. Pick up one-of-a-kind item — it is only fitting to accompany your once-in-a-lifetime trip.
“Our organization is not just about selling bags,” Hajji said. “We take a more holistic approach.”

— HOW MUCH
Ifassen’s products range in price from MAD 330 to 660.

— WHERE TO BUY
You can purchase online at Ifassen’s [website](http://www.ifassen.com).
EcoHeat

— WHAT IS IT

You can return home from Morocco with an intriguing, eco-friendly souvenir courtesy of EcoHeat, a Casablanca company that sells isothermal bags for slow cooking food. Founder Othmane Benhlima designed the COOKIT bags to reduce carbon emissions from burning firewood, which many Moroccans still use to heat food. With a COOKIT bag, you need only use enough fuel to boil water. After this, isothermal technology allows cooking to continue within the COOKIT bag for up to 12 hours. You can choose from a range of eye-catching patterns as well, making your curious new cooking tool a chic purchase as well.

— HOW MUCH

COOKIT bags cost MAD 435 each.

— WHERE TO BUY

You can buy COOKIT bags in person at DARE co-working space (13, Avenue Annaba 1er étage Hassan Rabat, Morocco 11000), online via EcoHeat’s website or its various social media platforms.

www.eheat.org

Read the Story on Switchers
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**Doumeign**

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**WHAT IS IT**

Fancy a fashion accessory that melds traditional handicrafts with modern practicality? [Safaa Hadid](https://www.facebook.com/Doumeign) can help you out with her store [Doumeign](https://www.facebook.com/Doumeign), which offers a line of high-quality woven doum (baskets) and other accessories like handbags. Safaa learned her trade from the best — her father was a basket craftsman. Doumeign can send you home with an eminently useful souvenir that also supports weaving communities in rural areas.

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**WHERE TO BUY**

You can purchase through Doumeign’s social media platforms, or in person at the Academy of Traditional Art’s co-working space, in the Hassan II mosque, Casablanca. Please contact Doumeign before visiting so that Safaa’s team can get your preferred items ready.

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**HOW MUCH**

Baskets retail for MAD 435 each.

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What to Do

Morocco is blessed with enticements for every type of tourist, from the north — with its Mediterranean ports and Spanish enclaves — to the striking mix of soaring mountains and sweeping deserts in the central and southern regions.

Cantal Bakker is the director of Pikala Bikes, a Marrakech-based foundation that encourages eco-friendly transport and generates local jobs with bicycles. She is also our Switcher on the ground, generously offering her advice for an environmentally conscious, four-day itinerary in Morocco.

For only four days, Cantal has confined her recommendations to the tourist haven of Marrakech, with an overnight stay in Essaouira. She suggests a few options for choosing your home base. Outside the city are both the ecolodge Villa Janna and Cantal’s personal favorite Jnane Tihiihit, while the simple yet elegant Dar Touyir is located amidst the action in downtown Marrakech.
Cantal advises Marrakech newcomers to join a tour with Pikala Bikes, during which friendly local guides can give you a three-hour rundown on the city’s charms, hotspots and general layout. Learn to orient your wanderings around the **Jemaa El Fna**, the legendary square that draws in tourists all day and night, with its colorful spread of food carts, juice sellers and street performers.

Look up and, a little distance away, you will see the elegant minaret of **Koutoubiya Mosque**, one of Marrakech’s tallest and most venerable buildings. Cantal suggests that you get up close to admire the mosque’s intricate stonework and relax in its lush garden.

You need not stray from the medina (old city) after lunch; instead, pound the winding alleyways on your way to **Le Jardin Secret**, a superbly preserved, ancient palace boasting two gardens and a tall tower. Information there will tell you about the water-efficient irrigation practices of ancient yesteryear in Marrakech.
— DAY TWO

Make your second day all about Morocco’s sustainable side. In the morning, you can learn about cultural preservation at Musee Tiskiwin, a fascinating exhibit on Amazigh (Berber) life over the centuries. The museum is the life’s work of its founder, Bert Flint, who continues studying Berber traditions into his eighties.

By afternoon, you could leave the city center for Terre d’Eveil, a vibrant community organization that runs permaculture workshops, sells natural cosmetics and provides refreshments in a tearoom. You might finish up by taking in a musical performance at Riad Denise Masson, a pretty old home bequeathed by Denise Masson, the late, much-loved French scholar.

— KOUTOUBIYA MOSQUE
— ECOTOURISME ET RANDONNÉES
— DAY THREE

Some retail therapy may be in order when you wake up, depending on the day of the week. Food lovers can target fresh produce at the Tuesday morning farmers’ market at restaurant La Trattoria, while bargain hunters will love the Bab El Khamis Flea Market on Thursdays (8am until noon).

Have some lunch before jumping on a bus to Essaouira, a journey that should take just over three hours. Take in sunset over the town’s oceanfront, which is adorned by cannons and fortifications dating back to 18th century. After dark, indulge in a tasty, locally sourced meal at Restaurant La Decouverte.

— DAY FOUR

Make your way back to La Decouverte ready to do a little hiking with Ecotourisme et Randonnées, a walking tour company owned by the restaurant’s management team. On foot, your guide will explain the community’s determined efforts to preserve biodiversity in the nearby Sous Valley.

Upon returning to Essaouira, buy a delicious frozen yoghurt from organic food spot Yoo Maroc before returning to Marrakech for your flight home.
Cantal enthuses that Morocco is a true haven for all food lovers, with plenty of vegetarian and vegan options thrown into the mix. In this section, she has kindly run through a few of her top dishes to sample while you are travelling about.

**FOOD PRICING RANGES:**

€ = MAD 20–50  
€€ = MAD 50–150  
€€€ = MAD 150–
Perhaps unsurprisingly, Cantal’s recommendations begin at the Djamaa El Fnna, where she suggests picking up a bowl of harira, a traditional soup made up of tomatoes, chickpeas, beans, spices and — on occasion — a little meat (€). Accompany your soup with a side of dates. Happily, your bank manager is unlikely to complain about the meal’s very reasonable price.

Near Bab Agnou you can tackle chebakia (fried pastry topped with a honey and rosewater syrup), a sickly sweet staple for the holy month of Ramadan (€). Full disclosure: Cantal is not so fond of chebakia, but many others cannot get enough of it!

Each region of Morocco boasts its own rich, local cuisine — and Marrakech is no different. The city prides itself on meat-heavy tanjia, which is traditionally slow-cooked over coals at the local hammam (public bathhouse). The chef packs meat into a tall clay pot (also called the tanjia), along with tasty extras like garlic, saffron, turmeric and lemon (€€).
Some readers will have seized on an apparent typo in the previous paragraph — surely tanjia is the same as **tajine**, Morocco’s world-famous stew? Almost, but tajine — available the country over — dials down the amount of meat significantly (indeed, you can find vegetarian tajines). Cantal’s advice: go with lamb and apricot tagine when inland, but switch in a version based on sardine fish balls when you are by the sea (€€).

This food crash course would not be complete without mentioning **couscous**, the omnipresent Moroccan staple of crushed semolina. Cantal typically takes her couscous with sour milk on Fridays, the day of Muslims for practising Sala’h in the mosque.

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**WHERE TO EAT**

In Marrakech, you can find fun, affordable fusion food at **Cafe Clock** (€€), where the menu runs together Berber eggs and harira with Western plates like blue cheese salad and that ever-reliable breakfast option, pancakes. By night, Cafe Clock puts on storytelling and traditional music events.

Another option is to visit the acclaimed non-profit center, **Amal** (€€). Book yourself in for breakfast, lunch or dinner via the center’s website, and you will be served delicious food by a staff of women from underprivileged backgrounds. The Amal Center’s founding president, Moroccan-American Nora Fitzgerald Belahcen, provides vocational training so that her staff can earn long-term work opportunities.

If the hustle and bustle of Marrakech’s medina becomes too much, **La Famille** (€€) may be just the tonic. Set in a peaceful garden, the restaurant turns out a simple menu of delectable vegetarian food.
To see the location of all businesses and sites mentioned, visit our custom map.

Access the Morocco Google Map

All photo and statistics credits can be found in this Document.

The Switchers travel guide was created by David Wood and Shaimaa Emam, with assistance from Mayya Husseini, Daniel Hires and Ananda Alonso.

Have comments or questions? We would love to hear from you at theswitchers@scprac.org

A special thanks to the Switchers in Morocco, whose knowledge, talents, and innovations made this guide a reality!

Follow the stories of Mediterranean changemakers online:

Switchers Website
Switchers Facebook
Switchers Instagram

— DISCLAIMER

The Switchers is a community of inspiring green entrepreneurs and changemakers in the Mediterranean region.

It is also a place where entrepreneurs of a similar passion for the environment can meet. The Switchers are individuals, enterprises or civil society organizations implementing innovative and ecological solutions that contribute to sustainable and fair consumption and production models. They are active in a variety of fields, such as organic farming, green tourism, renewable energy, or waste management.
The platform theswitchers.eu tells their stories of sustainable transformation and change. We aim to contribute towards a more differentiated picture of the region, and shine a light on the people who are working on a greener economy.

The Switchers platform has been developed by the Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC) in the framework of the SwitchMed Programme.

The SwitchMed Programme is implemented under the coordination of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and is executed in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), Economy Division; and the Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC) a component of the United Nations Environment Programme-Mediterranean Action Plan (UN Environment/MAP), in close coordination with the European Commission.

SwitchMed implementing partners work to accelerate the transition to Green and Circular Economy through capacity development for resource efficiency in the manufacturing industry, training for start-ups and entrepreneurs to develop skills in eco-design, green business plans, marketing and financing for sustainable products and services, agreements with the political leaders to establish a regulatory and legal framework, empowerment of civil society organisations to pioneer socially innovative solutions that tackle environmental challenges, and an action network of interested parties to connect with similar initiatives and networks, exchange information and broaden current activities.

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Travel Well.

The Switchers