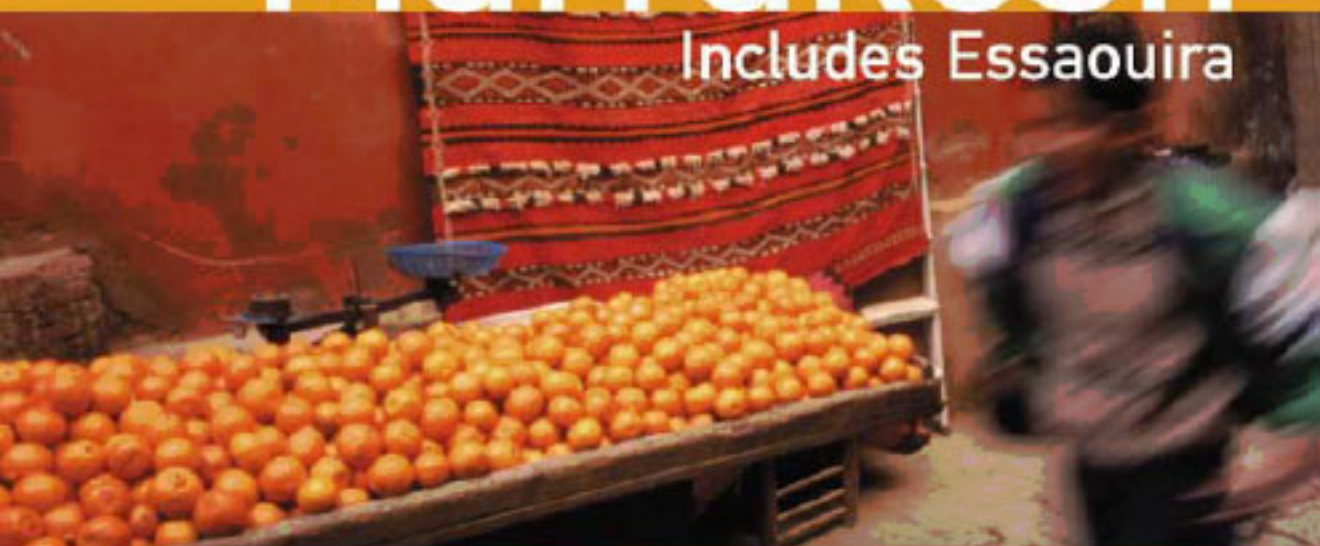


DIRECTIONS

Marrakesh

Includes Essaouira



Up-to-date DIRECTIONS

Inspired IDEAS

User-friendly MAPS

ACCURATE RELIABLE INFORMATIVE

Arabe, offering palatial style along with the usual de luxe facilities (air conditioning, a swimming pool and gourmet dining), are back in the Medina. This is also where you'll find the most characterful mid-range hotels, usually in refurbished houses with en-suite rooms priced at 300–400dh. Mostly in the Medina too, and often handily close to the Jemaa el Fna, are the cheapest hotels, with doubles costing around 100dh a night and shared showers and toilets.

If you want to lodge in more tranquil surroundings, it's also worth considering hotels in *Semlalia*, at the northern end of the Ville Nouvelle or, better still, a place out in the palmery to the northeast.

All of the top-end hotels and riads, and in fact many of the mid-range places too, take reservations online or by email, and even some inexpensive hotels can be booked by email. It's worth booking ahead, especially if you want to stay at one of the mid-range Medina hotels. At certain times of year, most notably around Christmas and Easter, you'll need to have reserved some time in advance, even to stay at one of the cheap hotels.

Jemaa el Fna and the Southern Medina

▶ SEE MAP ON PP.112–113

Dar les Cigognes 108 Rue de Berrima ☎044 38 27 40, ☎044 38 47 67, www.lescigognes.com. A luxury riad run by a Swiss-American couple in two converted Medina houses, done up in traditional fashion around the patio, but with modern decor in the rooms and suites. There's a library, a salon and a terrace where you can see storks nesting on the

walls of the royal palace opposite (hence the name, which means "house of the storks"). All rooms are en suite; doubles start at 1500dh.

Hotel Aday 111 Derb Sidi Bouloukat ☎044 44 19 20. This small budget hotel is well kept, clean and friendly, and pleasantly decorated, with doors and ceilings painted in traditional Marrakshi style. The rooms, grouped around a central patio, are small and don't all have external windows. Shower facilities are shared (5dh), with hot water round the clock. Doubles 80dh; breakfast not included.

Hotel Ali Rue Moulay Ismail ☎044 44 49 79, ☎044 44 05 22, hotelali@hotmail.com. A popular hotel with en-suite rooms, heated in winter and air-conditioned in summer. The hotel is used as an assembly point for various groups heading to the High Atlas, so it's a good source of trekking (and other) information, though it doesn't make a very good job of keeping out hustlers, and at times it has the air of a transport terminal. It also changes money, rents bicycles, has a cybercafé and expedition provisions shop, and can arrange car, minibus or 4x4 rental. There's also a great-value restaurant with all-you-can-eat buffet suppers (see p.56). The rooms vary a lot, so it's worth checking them out before deciding which to take. Book ahead, especially if you are likely to arrive late in the day. Doubles cost 170dh, dorm beds 40dh; both rates include breakfast.

Hotel CTM Jemaa el Fna ☎044 44 23 25. What's good about this big old hotel is location, location, location – above the former bus station on the Jemaa el Fna. The rooms are of a decent size, if drab. Some rooms have their own shower, but the drawback is the lack of hot water (though you could pop round to one of the hammams nearby). Rooms 28–32 overlook the Jemaa, which means that guests in those rooms can hear the performers day and night; the rooms at the back are much quieter. Breakfast is served on the roof terrace, which also overlooks the square. Doubles from 104dh.

Hotel Essaouira 3 Derb Sidi Bouloukat ☎044 44 38 05, ☎044 42 63 23, hotelessaouira@hotmail.com. One of

the most popular cheapies in Marrakesh – with good reason. It's a well-run, safe place, with friendly management, and services like laundry and a baggage deposit (handy if you're going trekking and don't want to carry all your luggage with you). Rooms are small and simple, and there's a rooftop café, where you can have breakfast. Reservations advised. Double rooms from 80dh excluding breakfast.

Hotel Gallia 30 Rue de la Recette ☎044 44 59 13, ☎044 44 48 53, @www.love-marrakesh.com/hotelgallia. In a restored Medina mansion, this little gem is beautifully kept and spotlessly clean. The en-suite rooms are arranged around two tiled courtyards, one of which has a fountain and a palm tree with caged songbirds. There's central heating in winter and air-conditioning in summer. Requires booking by fax, at least a month ahead if possible. Double rooms 410dh.

Hotel La Mamounia Av Bab Jedid ☎044 44 44 09, ☎044 44 49 40, @www.mamounia.com; toll-free booking: UK ☎0800/181123, Republic of Ireland ☎1800/409063, US and Canada ☎1-800/223 6800, Australia ☎1800/222033, New Zealand ☎0800/441016. Set within its own palatial grounds, this is Marrakesh's most famous hotel, described by former guest Winston Churchill as "the most beautiful place in the world". It is also the most expensive place in town, with all the services you could want – a business centre, a fitness centre, tennis and squash courts, a beauty salon, its own hammam and sauna, a pool of course, five restaurants, five bars and a casino. Decoratively, it is of most interest for the 1920s Art Deco touches by Jacques Majorelle (of Majorelle Garden fame), and their enhancements, in 1986, by the then Moroccan king's favourite designer, André Paccard. Despite the history, the fame and all the trimmings, however, standards of service here do not always match the price, and *La Maison Arabe* (see p.113) is generally better value if you're looking to be pampered, though it can't match the *Mamounia's* facilities or architectural splendour. Doubles from 3080dh; breakfast not included.

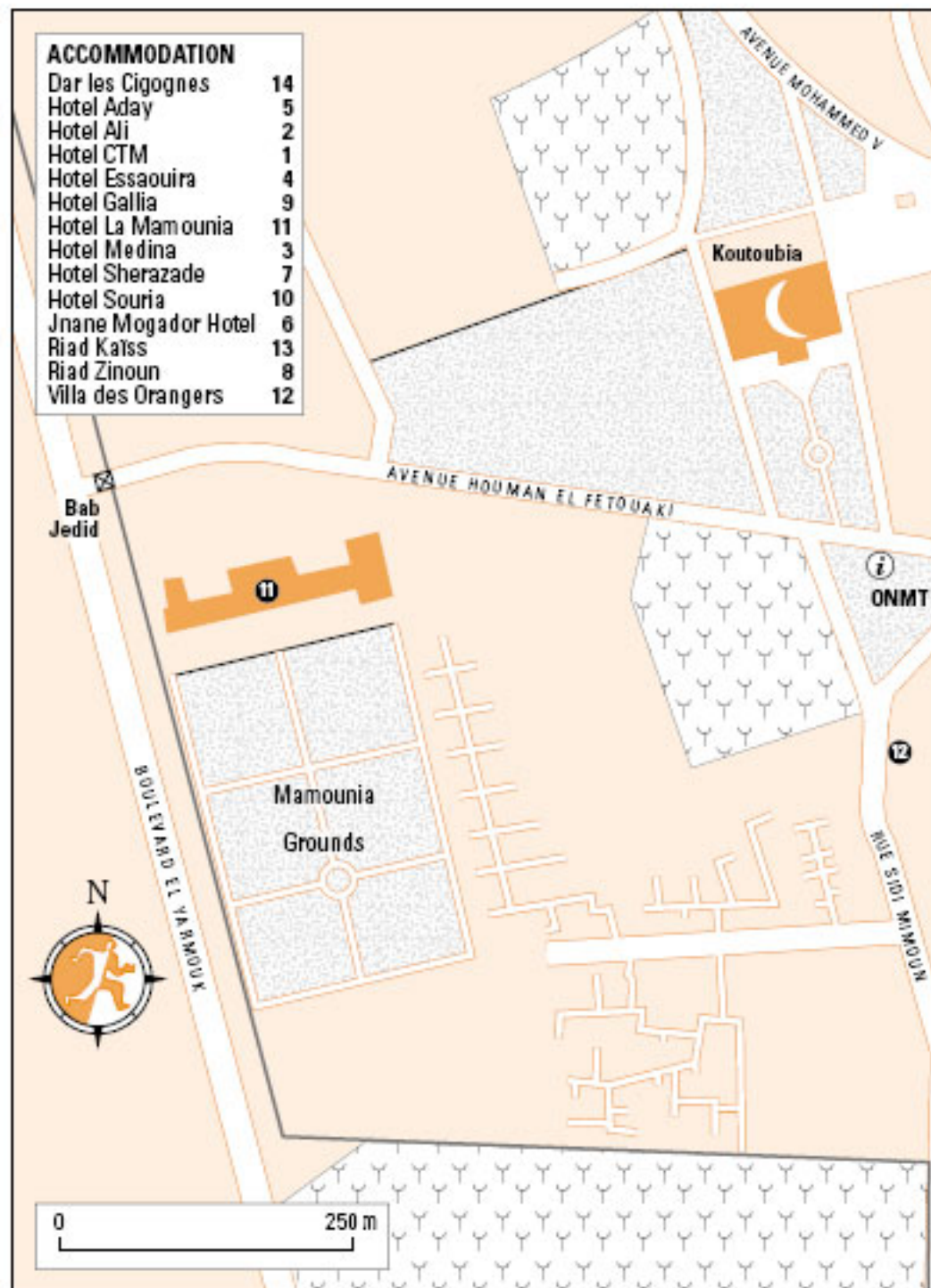
Hotel Medina 1 Derb Sidi Bouloukat ☎044 44 29 97. Located in a street full of good budget hotels, the *Medina* is a perennial favourite among the cheapies, and often full. It's clean, friendly and pretty good value, and the owner – who used to work in Britain as a circus acrobat – speaks good English. There's always hot water in the shared showers (5dh). They have a small roof terrace where you can have breakfast; in summer there's also the option of sleeping on the roof (25dh). Double rooms 100dh excluding breakfast (10dh).

Hotel Sherazade 3 Derb Djama, off Rue Riad Zitoun El Kadim ☎ & ☎044 42 93 05, @www.hotelsherazade.com. Before riads took off big time, this place was already on the scene, an old merchant's house prettily done up. Besides a lovely roof terrace, the hotel offers a wide variety of well-maintained rooms, some en suite. Run very professionally by a German-Moroccan couple, it's extremely popular with European visitors, so book well ahead. Prices tend to be on the high side compared with the competition (the *Gallia* and the *Jnane Mogador*): doubles start at 430dh, not including breakfast.

Hotel Souria 17 Rue de la Recette ☎044 42 75 45. Deservedly popular family-run hotel. The rooms, set around a pleasant patio, are small and well kept, but the real reason why people like this place is that the women who run it make you feel like a guest in their own home. Hot showers cost 10dh. Double rooms 100dh or 120dh; breakfast not included.

Jnane Mogador Hotel Derb Sidi Bouloukat, by 116 Rue Riad Zitoun El Kadim ☎ & ☎044 42 63 23, @www.jnanemogador.com. Run by the same management as the *Essaouira*, this relatively new place is just as homely and is already establishing itself as a favourite place to stay. In a beautifully restored old house, it boasts charming rooms around a lovely fountain patio, and a roof terrace where you can have breakfast, or tea and cake. Great value; doubles 300dh, though the rate doesn't include breakfast.

Riad Kaïss 65 Derb Jedid, off Rue Riad Zitoun El Kadim, Medina ☎ & ☎044 44



01 41, @www.riadkaïss.com. A luxury riad in a nineteenth-century house done out in quite an interesting contemporary Moroccan style – the light, modern decor seamlessly incorporates traditional features such as windows with stained glass in vivid primary colours. Rooms mostly surround a large open courtyard with orange trees, a fountain and recesses with divans to lounge on. There's also a large, cool salon, and a multi-level roof terrace with pavilions and a pool. Double rooms start at 1465dh.

Riad Zinoun 31 Derb Ben Amrane, off Rue Riad Zitoun El Kadim @044 42 67 93, @www.riadzinoun.com. A friendly

little riad, run by a French-Moroccan couple. It isn't the most chic of its kind in the Medina, but it is very pleasant, set around a patio (covered in winter, open in summer) in a nicely refurbished old house. Doubles from €65.

Villa des Orangers 6 Rue Sidi Mimoun, off Place Youssef Ben Tachfine @044 38 46 38, @044 38 51 23, @www.villadesorangers.com. Officially a hotel, but a riad in the true sense of the term, an old house around a patio garden (two gardens in fact) – with orange trees and a complete overdose of lovely carved stucco. There's a range of rooms and suites, many