

ESSAOUIRA IN MOROCCO - HAVEN NOT ONLY FOR JIMI HENDRIX



There's no denying that Essaouira in Morocco is a laid back city with a great swing. Its amazing fortifications, unique miles of white sandy beaches and its light blue waters seem to have been taken from a book and have turned this jewel into a popular retreat.

Such is the beauty the old coastal port has to offer that several famous musicians made their way to Essaouira in order to find that inspiration they needed to create the best tunes and that have become a legend for the city. Jimi Hendrix, Cat Stevens and Frank Zappa all visited Essaouira.

Luckily, the town doesn't need these famous names to be well-known all over the world. **The city's music festivals that take place from April to June manage to lure crowds of visitors each year.** You'll be surprised to find lots of street buskers as well as other artists performing beautiful music in some of the most fashionable cafes and restaurants in the area.

First-time visitors should visit the Il Mare restaurant if they want to experience the local beat. The restaurant has a balcony overlooking the old battlement of Skala de la Ville that will allow you to see the most spectacular sunsets while having some local wine and eating fresh oysters. There's a gnaoua band playing music every day and you will be able to feel the rhythm and learn more about their culture.

Tourists won't find it difficult to spot accommodation as the city is full of boutique hotels that offer the best services to make the stay an unforgettable experience. One of the best hotels in the area is the Heure Bleue Palais that is located in the Bab Marrakech gate. It's got an amazing building decorated with marble columns, cedar panels and a swimming pool on the rooftop, which is the only one in Essaouira.

Shopping in Essaouira is a heavenly experience. There are thousands of street markets that offer leather products, traditional clothes and spices, where you can find the best offers and where you will see local women gathering together.

If you have time, go to the Dar Tata that is an open-air café that serves the most delicious coffee you will ever drink. You can have a look at the arcades of the near-by grain market and even have a walk in the Mellah area to see some of the oldest houses that were once inhabited by Jewish people.

One distinctive feature of the houses in Essaouira is that all of them have a six-petals rose, which is the emblem of the town, carved in their entrances.

The town has some really attractive spots like the Hammam Babsi baths that is always full of locals having their daily bath and where once Orson Wells played its part in the movie Othello.

Another must-see place for tourists is Place Moulay Hassan, which is located close to the docks and that is the most important square in the town. You will be able to enjoy a cold beer and see street artists performing all kinds of arts.

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