

THE MOROCCAN CITY OF MEKNES



The royal city of Meknes is an interesting tourism destination. Located near ancient Roman ruins it is an ideal starting point for exploration of the country. Within the city tourists may go shopping to the traditional marketplace or enjoy the hamam sauna.

Tourists have to be careful not to get lost in the old city of Meknes as it is full of small crooked streets. Sooner or later they will certainly run into the el-Hedim square. As Ihned.cz reports, the square has been used as a stage for the street theatre since the Middle Ages. The square no longer witnesses executions as it did in those days but the traditional theatre has survived till our days. **Morocco is safer than the other destinations in the region.** The wave of unrest that is taking place in the Arab world has not hit the country hard so far. The city of Meknes is the smallest of the Moroccan royal cities. There are the Atlas Mountains south of the city and it is an ideal starting point for trips to nearby Fes. The biggest Roman ruins in the country, Volubilis, are also not far from there as well as the town of Moulay Idriss.

The old city is a maze where a good sense of direction is necessary. Men and women walking around in colorful clothes contrast the shabby facades very distinctly. **El-Hedim** is a square that was once used for public executions and official statements. Nowadays, it **is the center of social life**. Chairs in streets are occupied by men smoking water pipes. In the early evening people begin to gather around street actors; this kind of theatre has been practised there since the Middle Ages. Some tourists might enjoy staying in one of the city's traditional burgher houses. Others can go to the hamam sauna where a masseur provides his services to tired travelers.

Another labyrinth within the maze of the old city are the local souqs. Similarly to modern supermarkets they are divided into zones according to the type of goods they sell. Local traders usually offer jewelry, carpets, textile, embroiders or pottery. It is an ideal place to buy a souvenir to bring home and show friends.

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