



*Real Travelers - Real Info*

## **LivingAdventure's Custom Travel Guide**

## Casablanca

### Things to Do Tips

#### The minaret

**Source:** Casablanca Things to Do by JLBG; May 15, 2004

**Description:** King Hassan II, "Commander of the believers", is descending from Mohammed, and wanted to leave to the posterity a monument worthy his reign. It had to be finished for his 60th birthday and the time allotted was pretty tight. When completed, the minaret is the highest in the world (200 m) and can be seen from several dozen of kilometers away.

#### Old Casablanca (Ancienne Medina)

**Source:** Casablanca Things to Do by matcrazy1; Aug 4, 2005

**Description:** If anything in Casablanca could fit the Casablanca of Bergman and Bogart, it could be the old city called Ancienne Medina (ancient medina). Notice that the old town was largely destroyed by the earthquake of 1755. Rebuilding took place in 1770 under the reign of Sultan Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdallah. Its tiny streets are full of shops/stores and small squares. It's small, consisting mainly of smaller houses, which all seem to be from this century, and the alleyways dominating in other old cities, are rarely found here. There is a good market there, but look around before you buy, shop keepers here know their skills. Some thousand people live here, and in some spots, true beauty occurs.

**Directions:** North and northwest of the Place des Nations Unies.

#### Place des Nations Unies

**Source:** Casablanca Things to Do by matcrazy1; Aug 4, 2005

**Description:** Among the most visible aspects of Casablanca downtown/center are the wide boulevards flanked by white, usually tall buildings. The streets run out in all directions from the Place des Nations Unies (United Nations Square, former Place Mohammed V; built at the turn of the century and redesigned in the 1950s). This place is the central point of downtown Casablanca, and also the point where the modern town meets the medina. The main streets of Casablanca start here: Av. des Forces Armees Royales (FAR), Av. Moulay Hassan I, Av. Hassan II and Blvd. Mohammed V.

#### Quartier des Habous

**Source:** Casablanca Things to Do by matcrazy1; Aug 4, 2005

**Description:** Take a walk (+ eventually do shopping) around La Nouvelle Medina (Quartier des Habous) - this area looked very interesting in my opinion. Casablanca has two medinas: the old one called just medina and the new one built at the beginning of the 20th century called La Nouvelle Medina or the Habbous district (Quartier des Habous). It was interesting to visit little shaded squares and walk along narrow streets lined with arcades lead from one souk to another. I could see a lot of stores/shops and workshops there.

**Directions:** La Nouvelle Medina (Quartier des Habous) is about 4 km (2.5 mi) southeast of the centre of Casablanca (get a taxi or drive own or hired car).

#### See the mosaics inside the...

**Source:** Casablanca Things to Do by maxovna; Sep 12, 2002

**Description:** See the mosaics inside the church Notre Dame. They are made in Picasso style.

## Cobra Snakes and Dancing

**Source:** Casablanca Things to Do by Ehriq; Aug 22, 2003

**Description:** Djemaa el Fna, as that square is called, is the main attraction in Marrakech, and what goes on there probably fits most people's image of Morocco. The plaza is the main gathering point for locals and tourists alike, and we found ourselves drawn to it repeatedly. Different things go on there during different times of the day. Sometimes there are veiled women using syringes to pipe henna designs onto the hands and feet of waiting tourists, other times there are snake charmers blowing exotic tunes from flutes, apparently mesmerizing nearby cobras. There are all types of herbal medicine practitioners, and there are a couple of guys there who will (supposedly) pull a nagging tooth for you. There's usually someone testifying about the power of some particular product, and there are clumps of people listening as two or more of them argue a topic, "Point/Counterpoint"-style. At night, the fire eaters, storytellers, and musicians come out. There are food vendors selling everything from fresh steamed escargot to goat's brains to couscous to lamb kebobs. It's all cooked fresh, right there, and everything we ate was quite delicious (sorry, can't give you a report on those goat's brains). The perimeter of the whole circus is lined with carts from which men hawk fresh-squeezed orange juice, and they compete furiously for your business. Moroccan citrus fruit is absolutely fabulous, much better than anything I've ever had from Florida. Minute Maid will never gain a foothold here, when a glass of the fresh-squeezed stuff can be had for 25 cents.

**Address:** Middle of the Marrakech Medina

## CASABLANCA BAR

**Source:** Casablanca Things to Do by szabolcs; Aug 24, 2002

**Description:** CASABLANCA BAR This bar is the place for those who try to find something in the city that reminds them of the movie (which was actually filmed in Tangier not Casablanca). This bar has a very cosy atmosphere with waiters dressed Humphrey-Bogart style and a pianist playing songs known from the movie.

**Directions:** Inside Hyatt Regency Casablanca - Place des Nations Unies. It cannot be missed since the Hyatt's building dominates the square - see photo.

## A Controversial Jewel on the Atlantic Coast

**Source:** Casablanca Things to Do by Urban\_Kitten; Jan 3, 2004

**Description:** As the only mosque in Morocco that non-Muslims may visit, the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca is an obvious destination. Depending on which guidebook you read, it is either the 2nd or 3rd largest mosque in the world so bring a measuring tape & check for yourself. Constructed for the late king Hassan II on the event of his 60th birthday, its design balances the sensation of personal spirituality and state piety, cool somber colours with riotous zelig-tile work and desert shades with water playful fountains. With the exception of its chandeliers (Italian crystal) and its white granite columns, the structure is Moroccan through & through: from the colourful zelig tiles, granite, plaster, marble, to its deep-hued wood used in its construction. One cannot but marvel at its beauty, its serenity, and opulence. Its 210-meter minaret is the tallest in the world and shines a laser beam towards Mecca. Jutting out atop the Atlantic (you can see water below your feet as you walk atop the partially glass-tiled floor) its beauty is nonetheless compromised by its very modest location and 500-plus million dollar (US!!) price tag. It has been noted that less fortunate Moroccans have not benefited financially from the erection of the mosque, especially with the demolition of low-income neighbourhoods during its construction period. Having said that, it has been suggested that Moroccan arts & crafts were saved from extinction in the building & decorating of this mosque. Note: Tours (mandatory) are offered in a variety of languages. Remember to dress modestly!

**Address:** Boulevard Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah

**Directions:** Easiest way to reach the Hassan II mosque is to take the Boulevard des Almohades (turns into Blvd. Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah). It's on the shoreline so you really can't miss it.

## Colonial Architecture

**Source:** Casablanca Things to Do by jantichm; Apr 14, 2005

**Description:** Casablanca is a treasure trove of a distinct brand of French colonial architecture. In the 1920's and 30's, the French extended the city well beyond the original town (or "medina" in Arabic). The architectural style in vogue at that time, art deco, was combined with what the French believed to be "moorish" elements. The hybrid style, known as "neo-mauresque", can be seen all through the Ville Nouvelle that the French built. The prime example of neo-mauresque architecture is the Habous area, also known as the Nouvelle Medina. It's a rendition of a "typical Moroccan village" that Walt Disney could have designed. The area is famous for its bookstores and a very friendly place to stroll around.

**Your Notes:**