

Morocco: A Country Profile

The country has between 37 and 38 million people (2024). This is close to Saudi Arabia (36–37 million) and Peru (34–35 million). In terms of the USA, the population is slightly lower than California (39 million) and a bit above Texas (31 million).

Morocco is a young nation, with 27% of the population aged 0–14. Unlike the nations of Europe where people have very few children, Morocco has a healthy fertility rate of 2.05 children per woman. Morocco has a high emigration rate. A main destination is Spain, where Moroccans are the largest unreached people group.

The ethnic profile of Morocco is a mix of two main groups: Arabs and Berbers. The Arabs entered the country in the 8th Century at the dawn of Islamic imperialism. The indigenous people of the land are called the Amazigh, though in historical literature they are often called Berbers. The language of the Berbers is called Tamazigh and it has its own alphabet. The Bible has been translated into this language. Many Moroccans have mixed ancestry. For hundreds of years, Morocco also had a thriving Jewish community, but today almost all of the Moroccan Jews have emigrated to the state of Israel.

Sharing the gospel with Muslim citizens in the country is technically illegal. Despite this, Christianity has grown over the last few decades resulting in thousands of Moroccan Christians, though many have emigrated in search of religious freedom and better economic circumstances.

The capitol city is Rabat, and the largest city is Casablanca. The government is a monarchy and the gross domestic product per capita is about \$4000, like the Philippines or Egypt. Morocco's economy relies primarily on services (including tourism) and industry—mainly construction, mining and manufacturing.

Local cuisine includes tagine, which is a stew made with meat and vegetables cooked in a covered ceramic dish. Couscous is also common. Another local dish is called *pastel*, a pastry dish often stuffed with chicken, spices, egg, and almond. All these dishes have local variants, of course. *Tagine* refers both to the food and the clay vessels in which the food is prepared and served.



The local dialect of Arabic is a combination of modern Arabic, Berber, and French. It is not always easily understood by other people from the Arab world, and there are significant regional variations.

Unlike some other countries in the Arab world, Morocco has not experienced significant social upheaval in recent decades.

Ask your Moroccan friend about:

1. His favorite recipe for tagine
2. Why did she decide to emigrate from Morocco?
3. Let him know you heard about Moroccan Christians and ask him what life is like for those converts.
4. Take ten minutes to read up on the recent international news and ask about recent events. Your friend will be impressed as Americans rarely know about events outside of the USA. This is a way to show your friend honor.
5. Ask about what city they are from (or which city is near their hometown) and learn a bit about it. Then ask about a landmark there.

Note: Photo from *Commons Wikimedia*, public domain, Bawdeep2010.