

The Kingdom of Morocco

MAL FACT SHEET



SUMMARY

The Kingdom of Morocco is a country in Africa bordering Algeria to the east, the Western Sahara to the south, and the Mediterranean Sea to the North. The state has many influences of Arab, European, African, and indigenous Amazigh culture. It is the only monarchy in North Africa.

King: Mohammed VI

Capital: Rabat

Other notable cities: Marrakech, Chefchaouen, Fez, Casablanca

Gov Type: Constitutional Monarchy

Population: 37.46 million

Colonial History: Former Spanish Occupation in northern Morocco (1860), Former French Protectorate (1912), Independence gained 1952, Spanish withdrawal from Western Sahara (1976)

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The Kingdom of Morocco is about 716,550 sq km in total area, which is slightly larger than twice the size of the state of California, and has 2,945 km of coastline.

The climate is mediterranean in the north, with temperatures increasing moving towards the interior. The south of the country is hot, arid desert.

The northern coast of Morocco is mountainous with the Rif mountains stretching across the tip of the country and the Atlas mountains in the interior with large plateaus and valleys and fertile coastal plains while the south is mostly low and flat desert with rocky and sandy ground.

Natural resources include phosphates, iron ore, manganese, lead, zinc, fish and salt. Land use is divided between agricultural land (67%), forest (11.5%) and other uses (21%).

There are natural hazards such as in the northern mountains where the region is subject to earthquakes, droughts, windstorms, flash floods, and landslides. In the arid south, dangers include hot, dry sirocco wind and widespread harmattan haze that exists 60% of the time, severely restricting visibility.

Economy and Politics



DEMOGRAPHICS

Noun: Moroccan(s)

Adjective: Moroccan

Ethnic Groups: 99% Arab-Amazigh (Berber), 1% Other

Languages: Arabic (Official), Tamazight languages (Tamazight (Official), Tachelhit, Tarifit), French (Language of Business, Government, Diplomacy)

Religions: 99% Muslim (Official; <0.1% Shia, rest Sunni), 1% Other (Christian, Jewish, Baha'i)

Literacy: 75.9% (Male 84.8%, Female 67.4%)

Period of demographic transition, with population growth at a declining rate due to improved health care and increased female education attainment, however, the job creation rate has not kept pace with the growth of Morocco's working age population.

ECONOMY AND GDP

Morocco's economy is described as lower middle-income in North Africa, and there are currently efforts to recover from recent drought and earthquakes using tourism (making use of the state's nine world heritage sites), manufacturing, and raw materials as well as trade and investment with the EU, reform programs and private sector investments.

Real GDP (Purchasing Power Parity): \$307.443 billion (2022), \$303,621 billion (2021), \$281.076 billion (2020)

Real GDP Growth Rate: 1.26% (2022), 8.02% (2021), -7.18% (2020)

Real GDP Per Capita: \$8,100 (2022)

GDP (Official Exchange Rate): \$130.913 billion (2022)

Inflation Rate (Consumer Prices): 6.66% (2022), 1.4% (2021), 0.71% (2020)

GDP - Composition: 14% Agriculture (2017), 29.5% Industry (2017), 56.5% Services (2017)

Unemployment Rate: 9.99% (2022), 11.22% (2021), 11.73% (2020)

Youth Unemployment: 27.2% (2021)

MAIN POLITICAL CONTENTIONS

Morocco and Algeria have had contentious relations for decades, despite their shared history of French control. Algeria was annexed by France in contrast to Morocco's protectorate status, meaning that Algeria was ruled more strictly by France. During this time, French authorities in Algeria began to encroach into areas that were generally considered a part of Morocco, despite the lack of a formal barrier. So, when Algeria gained independence from France, just six years after Morocco, Morocco saw this as an opportunity to regain these lost territories, engaging in skirmishes that escalated into the 1963 Sand War. Fortunately, negotiations took place and the war did not last long. Despite the briefness of the war, it placed set a contentious tone in the relations between the two states.

One of the most significant issues in Moroccan politics is the area of the Western Sahara, a region located between southern Morocco and Mauritania. The Sahrawis inhabit Western Sahara and started a campaign for independence after Spain withdrew its colonial claims in 1975. Morocco, however, viewing Western Sahara as a part of its kingdom, sent 350,000 Moroccans to the region, annexing it to Morocco. The Sahrawi's established the Polisario Front to continue the fight for independence from Morocco with Algeria's financial and military support. Eventually, with continued escalating tensions, Algeria closed its border with Morocco in 1994.

Morocco: A Timeline

1 October 1958
Morocco joins the Arab League two years after independence from France

26 February 1961
First king of Morocco, Mohammed V, dies and Hassan II becomes king

25 September 1963
Morocco starts the Sand War with Algeria over contested border

27 February 1976
Morocco and Algeria sever diplomatic relations

12 November 1984
Morocco leaves the African Union in protest of the admittance of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, acknowledging the Western Sahara's right to independence

16 May 1988
Morocco and Algeria restore diplomatic relations

23 July 1999
King Hassan II dies and Mohammed VI become king of Morocco

2009 - 2018
Morocco severs diplomatic relations with Iran after claims that Bahrain was historically part of Iran and alleged attempts to spread Shia Islam and severs relations again in 2018 because of Iranian support and arming of the Polisario Front

31 January 2017
Morocco rejoins the African Union

22 December 2020
Morocco normalizes relations with Israel in exchange for the U.S. recognizing Morocco's claim over Western Sahara

24 August 2021
Morocco and Algeria cut diplomatic relations once more