Fes Travel Guide: The Ancient Medina

2–3 Days in Morocco's Spiritual Capital · Transit & Itineraries



Explore Fes with practical guidance on the medina, transport connections, and historic sights.

MOROCCO EMERGENCY CONTACTS

- **Royal Gendarmerie (Rural/Roads): 177**
- **Urban Police (Medina): 190**
- **Protection Civile (Ambulance): 150**
- **Autoroutes ADM Highway: 5050**
- **International SOS: 112**

Keep this information close. Mobile availability may vary by network.

Field Intelligence: Ground Rules

Rule #1: Cash, Cards & ATMs
Payment methods vary by business: some hotels and restaurants accept cards, while smaller vendors prefer cash. ATM availability can vary. Carry an amount of cash that suits your plans and check your bank’s foreign fees.

Rule #2: The "Closed Street" Redirection Tactic
People may offer unsolicited directions or services in busy parts of the medina. Politely decline if you do not need help, and verify your route with an offline map or your accommodation.

Budget Planning: Cost & Logistics Matrix

Real-world expense projections based on current municipal fees and verified receipts.

TRAVEL PROFILE	LODGING / NIGHT	DAILY DINING	LOCAL TRANSIT	EXPERIENCES
Eco / Autonomous	250–450 MAD *Authentic guesthouse*	120–180 MAD *Street bissara, brochettes*	10–25 MAD *Shared petit taxi, Line 16*	20–50 MAD *Bou Inania & Nejjarine*
Mid-Range Comfort	750–1,400 MAD *Restored riad w/ breakfast*	350–550 MAD *Café Clock, Ruined Garden*	60–120 MAD *Private taxi, luggage porter*	250–500 MAD *Ceramics, licensed guide*
Luxury & Curated	2,500–5,500 MAD *Palais Faraj or Riad Fès*	850–1,600 MAD *Nur tasting menu*	180–350 MAD *Private Mercedes transfer*	1,200–2,200 MAD *Private Volubilis car*

The Complete 2 to 3-Day Fes Circuit

Day 1: The Sacred Medieval Core & Tanneries

Starting Point: Bab Bou Jeloud (The Blue Gate) | **Key Gate Access:** Bab Rcif / Place Batha

MORNING: MARINID MASTERPIECES

Start at 08:30 at Bab Bou Jeloud. Descend along Talaa Kebira to reach the Bou Inania Madrasa (20 MAD). Observe the flawless carved stucco and zellige tiles. Continue to the Nejjarine Museum of Wooden Arts & Crafts, housed in an 18th-century trading fondouk.

MIDDAY: AL QUARAOUIYINE & DINING

Progress to the University and Mosque of Al Quaraouiyine. While the prayer hall is reserved for Muslims, you can admire the sweeping courtyard through its brass doorways. Adjacent lies the Al-Attarine Madrasa. For lunch, try The Ruined Garden or Café Clock.

AFTERNOON: COPPER BEATS & CHOUARA LEATHER VATS

Follow the rhythmic clanging to Place Seffarine, then wind through the spice souks toward the Chouara Tanneries. To observe the tanners working in the stone pits filled with natural dyes, head to an established leather boutique balcony.

Book a Certified Medina Walking Tour

Includes licensed cultural historian & direct tannery balcony access

Day 2: Imperial Splendor, The Mellah & Ceramic Masters

Starting Point: Royal Palace (Dar al-Makhzen) | **Key Landmark:** Ain Nokbi Pottery Quarter

MORNING: ROYAL GATES & JEWISH MELLAH

Begin at the grand plaza fronting the Royal Palace to view its seven monumental golden brass doors. Walk into the historic Jewish Mellah, noting the contrasting architecture with exterior windows and wooden balconies. Visit the 17th-century Ibn Danan Synagogue.

AFTERNOON: MASTER ARTISANS OF AIN NOKBI

Take a taxi to Ain Nokbi, the ceramics quarter. Tour the workshops at the Art Naji cooperative to see master potters shaping clay and chiseling fired glaze for zellige tiles. At sunset, take a taxi up to the Marinid Tombs (Borj Nord) to witness the evening Call to Prayer.

Compare Car Rental Rates with DiscoverCars

Free cancellation & zero-deductible insurance options available for road trips

Day 3: Culinary Immersion OR Volubilis Roman Ruins

Option A: Gastronomic Apprenticeship inside the medina (e.g., The Clock Kitchen or Palais Amani), starting with a guided market walk and ending with a traditional hammam ritual.

Option B: Hire a private driver to the UNESCO Roman ruins of Volubilis (Walili), retaining vivid 3rd-century BC mosaics. Continue to the imperial city of Meknes to marvel at Bab El-Mansour and the royal granaries of Heri es-Souani.

Reserve Private Volubilis & Meknes Day Trip

Includes pickup at your medina gate & flexible departure timing

Where to Stay: Verified Historic Riads

Selecting the right riad requires evaluating luggage accessibility and gate proximity.

- **Riad Fès – Relais & Châteaux (Ultra-Luxe):** Access via Place Batha. Blends Andalusian and Moorish design with an outdoor pool and rooftop bar.
  Check Availability on Booking.com
- **Palais Faraj Suites & Spa (Palatial):** Access via Bab Ziat (Direct driveway). Aristocratic palace on the southern ridgeline featuring true five-star luxury.
  Check Availability on Booking.com
- **Riad Laaroussa & Dar Roumana:** Intimate boutique charm accessed via Bab Guissa / Aïn Zleten. Exceptional seasonal dinners and quiet courtyards.

Transit & Logistics

ONCF Train Connections: Fès-Ville connects to Casablanca, Rabat, and Tangier. Plan your route on the official ONCF Voyages journey planner. Confirm departure on station displays.

Fes-Saïss Airport (FEZ): Located outside the historic center. Confirm the fare and destination gate with taxi drivers before departure. Ask your riad which medina vehicle-access point is most convenient.

Packing Checklist for Fes el-Bali

- **Vibram-Soled Footwear:** The polished limestone cobblestones are slick. Wear broken-in trail shoes with reliable traction.
- **Breathable Modest Layers:** Pack lightweight linen trousers, long skirts, and shirts that cover shoulders and knees.
- **High-Capacity Power Bank:** Dense masonry causes phones to expend extra power searching for GPS signals. Carry an external battery for offline navigation.

Frequently Asked Questions

IS FES SAFE FOR SOLO FEMALE TRAVELERS?

Fes is generally safe. Solo travelers may encounter persistent verbal interactions or shop invitations. Dressing modestly, walking with clear direction, and keeping offline maps handy will ensure a relaxed visit.

WHAT IS THE BEST TIME OF YEAR TO VISIT FES?

Spring (March-May) and Autumn (Sept-Nov) offer pleasant temperatures (20°C to 26°C). Summers can exceed 40°C in the medina valley, while winter nights can drop to 5°C.

CAN NON-MUSLIMS ENTER MOSQUES IN FES?

Active prayer halls (like Al Quaraouiyine) are reserved for Muslim prayer. However, non-Muslim visitors are welcome inside historical madrasas (Bou Inania and Al-Attarine) during visiting hours.

Direct Travel Desk: WhatsApp Concierge

Have a question about riad porter fees, train schedules, or rental car pick-ups? Message our WhatsApp desk directly for real-time, vetted advice.

Message us on WhatsApp (+212 670 951 796)

Average response time: < 25 minutes

Peer Travel Community

Connect with fellow travelers, share recommendations, and get vetted insights for your trip.

Join the Morocco Travel Advice Facebook Group