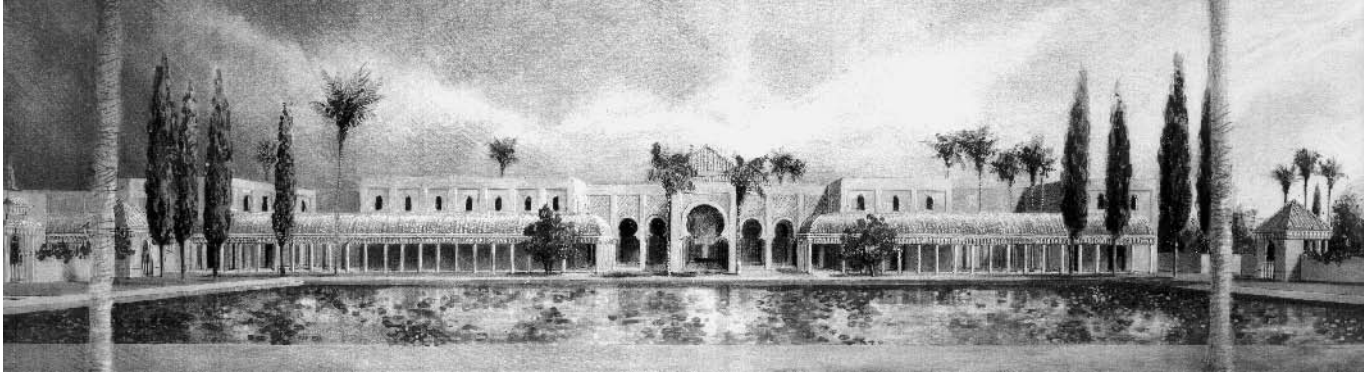


## AMANJENA



### ACCOMMODATION

Amanjena's 18 rose-toned *Pavilions*, six *Pavilions Bassin*, eight *Pavilions Piscine*, six two-storey *Maisons* and the two-bedroom *Al-Hamra Maison* all radiate from the ancient *bassin* (irrigation pool) which lies at the heart of the property.

**Pavilions:** The resort's 32 air-conditioned *Pavilions* lie beneath their own graceful *stuc Venetien* domes. The pale peach-coloured walls feature a lustrous *tadlekt* finish, a treatment originally reserved for waterproofing *bammam* (steam bath) walls. Under the dome is a king-size bed and a wood-burning fireplace brightens the living area. Other furnishings include a daybed and a desk finished in Moroccan leather, as well as a cherry-wood chair. Ouarzazate green marble finishes the bathroom with its stepped and columned bathtub, twin vanities, soaring mirrors, twin dressing areas and separate shower and toilet. Berber carpets are scattered about the *zellij*-tiled floors.

Sliding glass and cedar doors lead to each *Pavilion's* garden courtyard with views either of the golf course or olive groves. The *Pavilions Bassin* enjoy sweeping views over the central irrigation pool whilst the *Pavilions Piscine* (pool pavilions) have their own 25-square metre heated pools and extended private gardens. Courtyards feature large lounging couches flanked by black lanterns as well as *zellij* fountains recessed into the terracotta-tiled floors. Chaise lounges and Maillechort candle lanterns lend Moroccan ambience. For families or couples travelling together, the courtyard's facing cedar doors can be opened to the adjacent *Pavilion*. All *Pavilions* enjoy a pillared *minzab* (gazebo).

**Maisons:** Amanjena's six two-storey, two-bedroom *Maisons* rise seven metres from floor to ceiling in a variation of the Moroccan town house. The living area, located on the ground floor, features an arc-cut fireplace, a *zellij* wall fountain and a small bathroom. The self-contained guest bedroom, with its queen-size bed, bathroom with separate shower and toilet, dressing area and separate courtyard entrance, is also located on this floor.

The master suite upstairs features a king-size bed and divan, while the en suite bathroom is defined by marble columns, a domed shower, a pillared green marble bathtub and separate toilet. Each *Maison's* courtyard enjoys its own private heated swimming pool, most with views directly over the *bassin*. Two of the six *Maisons* come with garden courtyards. These *Maisons Jardin* feature a fireplace, a large *minzab*, a butler's pantry and a shade tree.

**Al-Hamra Maison:** The largest accommodation unit is the *Al-Hamra Maison*. This graceful abode features an extensive main pavilion with a large indoor living and dining area, an open fireplace and private butler service. Two bedrooms are linked by an open passageway to the shared garden which offers two *minzabs* for dining and lounging as well as a private 36-square metre heated pool.

### FACILITIES AND SERVICES

**ENTRANCE COLONNADE:** Amanjena's Entrance Colonnade leads past facing courtyards and fountains strewn with rose petals. Imposing double oak doors-within-doors, handcrafted in Agadir, are carved

with Berber motifs and similarly massive, pivot-hinged doors front each of Amanjena's main public rooms. Flanked by straw-flecked columns, this central promenade is tiled in *bejmat* (terracotta) shades of plum, sand and soil inset with a switchback flourish of green *zellij* tiling. The colonnade's cedar ceiling is a lofty nine metres high above the elegant Moresque arches of a Moroccan palace.

The resort's reception and concierge salons are located on either side of the colonnaded entranceway. So too, are scalloped fountains of green marble which one can hear from open-air courtyards. The symmetry continues a few steps on with facing fireplaces columned in green marble. The adjoining lounges feature circular banquettes of hand-printed velvet and Arabic carpets in the 'rosy-orange' hue that is Amanjena's signature colour. On each banquette stands a large brass lantern. The Entrance Colonnade ends in a cluster of date palms and a pomegranate garden that shades the walkway of the main *bassin*.

**RESTAURANTS AND BAR:** The Restaurant is open for dinner and specialises in authentic Moroccan and Mediterranean cuisine. Soft lighting lends warmth to the generously-proportioned room, centred by a scalloped onyx fountain surrounded by olive trees beneath a commanding central skylight. Arched moucharabieh wood screens decorate the upper reaches of onyx pillars while the tinted *plâtre ciselé* walls are the colour of honey, chiseled with Berber designs. Banquettes and tables line the walls. During the summer months, dinner seating is moved outdoors.

**The Thai Restaurant**, situated alongside the swimming pool, is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The light-filled room features banks of glass doors and coral-*tadlekt* walls decorated with old Moroccan leather horse saddles. **The Pool Terrace** meanwhile is open for breakfast and lunch, overlooking the pool and adjacent golf course. Guests can also enjoy private dining in their *Pavilion* or *Maison*. Special dinners or buffets to celebrate a unique occasion can be arranged. Upon request, intimate dinners accompanied by local music can be organised in the **Caidal Tent**, a traditional and romantic venue situated in an olive grove. The Caidal Tent features a traditional wood oven, where *Mechoui* is prepared.

Featuring clusters of cotton-*sabra* armchairs, **The Bar** is ideal for casual dining, pre-dinner aperitifs and post-dinner nightcaps. Located just off Amanjena's entranceway, the venue is airily cool in summer and warmly welcoming during winter with its open fireplace and ambient lighting. Smoke-tinted mirrors along with old Berber daggers and Arabic swords in scabbards of deer antler, camel bone and olive wood decorate the walls. Housed within The Bar, **The Fumoir** offers a selection of cigars.

**THE LIBRARY:** The two-storey Library features a fireplace and a six-metre, double-volume ceiling. A balcony runs along the perimeter of the second floor. Light filters in from dozens of windows cut on varying levels into the *tadlekt* walls. Recessed glass shelving houses books, magazines and newspapers, as well as DVDs and the distinctive green pottery of Tamegroute, a village in the Moroccan Sahara. A selection of travel books and board games is also available. The Library's tables are of wild-cherry wood inlaid and stained to an ebony gloss. The room's upper level is fringed by a Moucharabieh-screened railing which encircles most of the room. Cozy *masria* (Moroccan daybeds) frame the fireplace.

**SWIMMING POOL:** Amanjena's 33-metre heated outdoor swimming pool is finished in glittering green tiles of *écaille de poisson*-cut *zellij*. Chaise lounges and umbrellas line the pool's terrace, framed by hibiscus. The pool area features a *pisé*-style arch over a wide wall fountain and a separate shallow pool.

**SPA:** The *hammam* or steam bath is as central to Moroccan life as mint tea. Not surprising then that it is also the steamy heart of Amanjena's Spa. Each hammam (one for men, another for women) is complemented by showers, washrooms, a dressing area and a glassed-in whirlpool, opening onto a fountain courtyard bordered by a *pisé*-wall two metres high. The *hammam* itself is a stepped, two-chamber room of Moresque arches meeting a vaulted ceiling. Treatments available at the Spa include massages, facials, scrubs and wraps, as well as manicures and pedicures. The Spa also incorporates a timber-floored gym.

**TENNIS COURTS:** Amanjena has two clay tennis courts floodlit for night play. Racquets and balls are complimentary. Guests are recommended to bring their own tennis shoes. The tennis grounds include central *minzahs* (gazebos) for drinks and rest breaks between matches.

**BOUTIQUE:** The Boutique is located within the cedar-ceilinged colonnade that embraces the main swimming pool. A variety of locally-crafted products is available for purchase including Moroccan art and handicrafts ranging from jewellery to brass lanterns, pottery and antiques. All fabric items for sale including tablecloths, shawls, caftans and *djellabas* are hand-woven. Some are created exclusively for Amanjena.

**BICYCLES:** Mountain bikes are available for exploring the paved pathways that lead from Amanjena through the surrounding olive groves and past the golf course and garden villas that lie alongside it.

## DESTINATION



### LOCATION

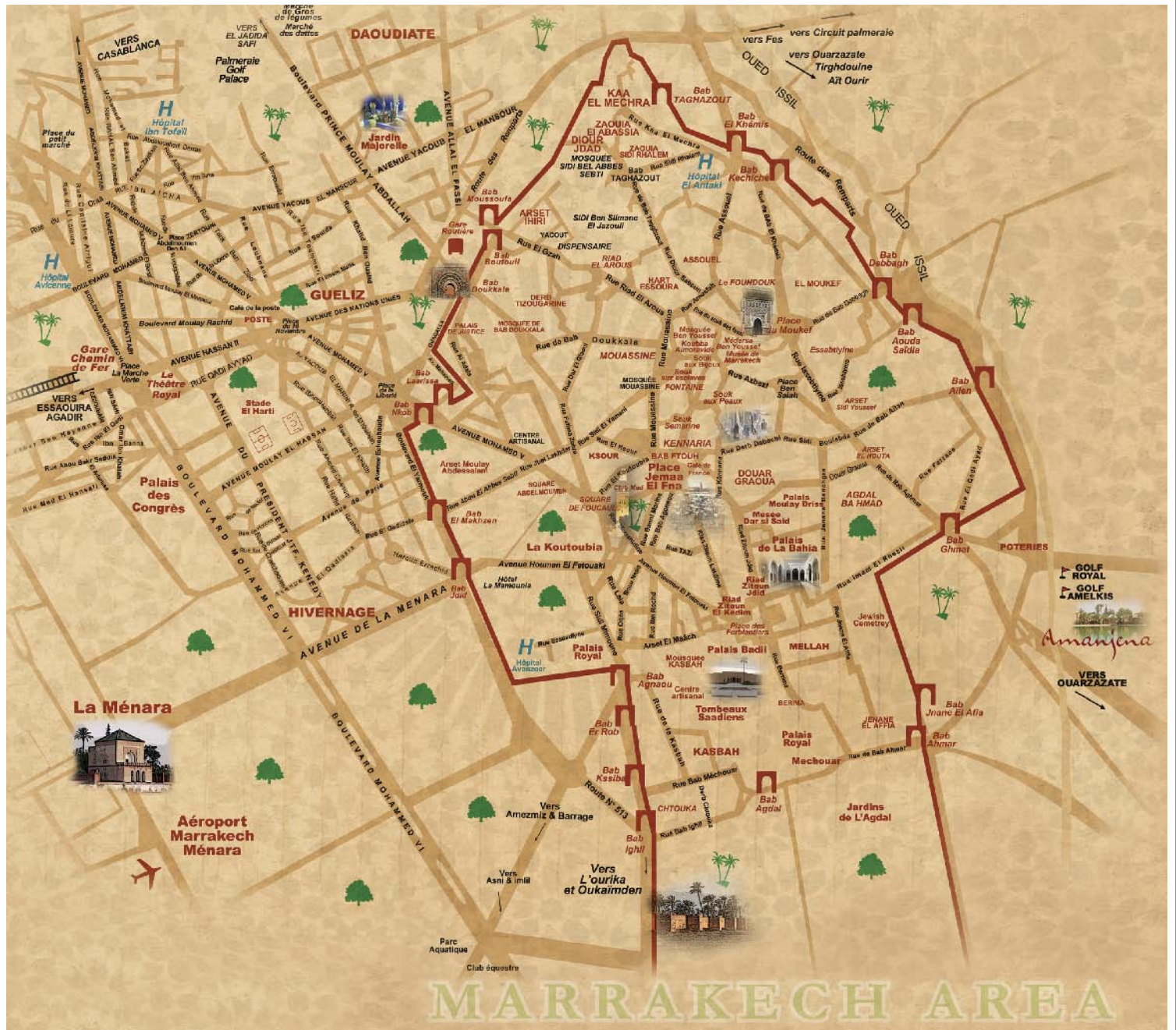
Amanjena, or 'peaceful paradise', is the first Amanresort on the African continent. The property is located just outside the ancient Moroccan city of Marrakech on the southern road to Ouarzazate, the gateway to the Sahara Desert. The High Atlas Mountains claim the Marrakech horizon and the Atlantic coast is just two hours away. The 18-hole Amelkis Championship Golf Course lies immediately alongside Amanjena, with a second course – the Royal Golf Course – just minutes away. Amanjena is 20 minutes from the airport and the drive passes the king's palace and Agdal Gardens, a 12th-century estate of irrigated olive orchards and bitter orange trees.

Marrakech came into being nearly 1,000 years ago through the brilliance of 11th-century Almoravid irrigation. Water is also the unifying element of Amanjena. Central to the resort is a *bassin*, an ancient

irrigation pool, inspired by Marrakech's 12th-century Menara Gardens. Two long canals flow from Amanjena's central *bassin* and these nurture the resort gardens, full of olive trees, soaring date palms, orange-flame bougainvillea, hibiscus and pomegranate.

Known in Arabic as *Al Medina al-Hamra*, the 'Red City', due to its rosy-hued walls and structures, Marrakech was the inspiration for Amanjena's design. The resort's walls echo the city's old *pisé* (rammed earth) buildings as well as the Berber villages that cling to the High Atlas Mountains. Green is also a predominant colour in the oasis of Marrakech – the colour of Islam, paradise, royalty and abundance. The colour of nature gilds Amanjena, too: its lawns and vines, its emerald-clay roofs, Moroccan marble fountains and the dazzle of hand-cut, glazed tiles known as *zellij*.

*A few kilometres beyond the walls of Amanjena lies the fabled city of Marrakech. A number of excursions have been created to assist guests in discovering this ancient metropolis. Half and full-day trips accompanied by a guide and driver are available. Private tours and treks beyond Marrakech can also be arranged.*



## ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCE

**MEDINA:** From the Arabic *madina* (city), the medina is the heart and soul of Marrakech. Largely surrounded by its original ramparts and 12th-century fortress walls of red earth, this 'fully preserved historic town', as UNESCO has called it, is a World Heritage Site. It presents a captivating inner world of winding lanes, old *fondouks* (inns), *hammams* and souks (shops) of every kind amidst the enticing smells of cumin, mint tea and barley bread baking in communal ovens.

**LANDMARKS:** Marrakech's most memorable landmark is the 12th-century **Koutoubia Minaret**, the tallest structure in the city at 70 metres. Built in classic Moorish-Moroccan style, it is the oldest and grandest of the surviving Almohad-era towers. Established in the 14th century and completely rebuilt in the 16th century, the **Ben Youssef Medersa** is among the most beautiful of Marrakech's buildings. Recently restored, the former Islamic theological college features *zellij* tiles, carved wood and intricate plaster work.

**PLACE DJEMAA EL FNA:** The ancient Place Djemaa el Fna is one of the busiest squares in Africa, bustling with dancers, acrobats and musicians by day, and transforming into an open-air restaurant at night.

**PALACES:** Marrakech is rife with palaces, but the 16th-century **El Badi Palace**, now in ruins, was once the largest and most luxurious of them all. Every June it takes on a hint of its former grandeur, hosting the National Festival of Popular Arts, Morocco's biggest annual music and folklore festival. The palace also incorporates the **Koutoubia Minbar**, a masterpiece of medieval religious craft.

**La Bahia Palace** is the most notable of the many grand mansions built in the late 19th century. It was used in the filming of Lawrence of Arabia, among other movies. The city's formal royal palace is **El Makhzen**, built in the 12th century during the reign of the Almohads. Another of the remaining 19th century palaces, **Dar Si Said**, is now home to the Marrakech Museum of Moroccan Arts.

Where there are palaces, there are tombs, and few are more inviting than those of the 16th-century Saadian Dynasty. Located in a peaceful garden setting, the **Saadian Tombs** are situated around two richly-adorned mausoleums.

**GARDENS:** **Agdal Gardens** and **Menara Gardens** are ancient green expanses rather than formal flower gardens, each with a central irrigation *bassin* and groves of olive trees. Both gardens are popular picnic spots. The **Majorelle Gardens**, created by French artist Jacques Majorelle, are tropically lush with flowers, palms, cactus and bamboo. The artist's original studio is now an Islamic art museum.

**HIGH ATLAS MOUNTAINS:** The foothills are no more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour away past fields of corn and barley and orchards thick with olive trees. The mountains harbour many dazzling pieces of the past, from ancient mosques to crumbling *kasbahs* and cliffside Berber villages.

**THE SEA:** The white-washed village of Essaouira is celebrated for its brightly-coloured doors, window shutters and fish carts, all in vivid shades of blue. This Atlantic coastal resort, with its ancient harbour and Portuguese forts, seafood restaurants, medina and thuja-wood craftsmen, is just a two-hour drive from Marrakech.

**MARKETS:** The Moroccan market is more than an outdoor bazaar for haggling over vegetables, mule saddles and portable steam baths. At weekly markets in small towns all over the country, locals socialise, get a haircut, see a dentist, visit a scribe, even arrange for a wedding contract. The rural market is a delightful distillation of everyday Moroccan life.

**GOLF:** The Amelkis Golf Course, alongside Amanjena, has splendid views to the High Atlas Mountains. A second course, Royal Golf de Marrakech, is just a few minutes' drive from the resort.

**BIKING:** Dirt trails and picturesque scenery make the rural areas around Amanjena ideal for biking excursions. Guests can also cycle in and around the city itself.

**HIKING:** Venture into the High Atlas Mountains or take a leisurely walk in the countryside surrounding Marrakech. The farms, villages and enduring culture of the Berbers, Morocco's indigenous people, provide endless photo opportunities and fascinating insight into the country's past.

## MOROCCO

**Government:** The Kingdom of Morocco is a constitutional monarchy. The country's capital is Rabat.

**Geography:** The Moroccans know their country as Maghrib. In Arabic, the word means 'sunset' or 'west,' acknowledging the Kingdom's place as the most western of the Arabic countries. Bordered in the north by the Mediterranean Sea (Spain is only an hour's ferry ride away) and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, Morocco is blessed with a long coastline and scenic beaches. Add to that four dramatic mountain ranges and the great oases and dunes of the Sahara, and you have a subtropical land of remarkable geographic and climatic diversity. At 4,165 metres high in the High Atlas Mountains, Mount Toubkal is the third highest peak in Africa.

**Population:** Morocco's population is over 30 million. About 55 percent are Arabic and 44 percent Berber. The country's major urban centres are Casablanca – the economic and industrial capital – and the four ancient imperial cities of Marrakech, Rabat, Fez and Meknès. Agadir and Tangier are also major cities.

**Climate:** Morocco's latitude is similar to that of Southern California. Like California, Morocco's varied landscape shapes a climate of considerable diversity, with extremes in the desert and mountain regions. While you may not want to experience Morocco's southern desert in July or August, summer hiking in the Atlas Mountains is a popular activity. Summers in Marrakech are hot and dry, with temperatures reaching 38°C (100°F). Sun is the rule year-round, with occasional rain falling from October through March. Marrakech's long temperate winters from November to April settle in with pleasant average temperatures of 22°C (71°F). Indeed, most days are warm enough to sunbathe, and the temperature at the Amanjena pool is usually a comfortable 27°C (81°F).

**Language:** Arabic is the official language of Morocco, though the local version is far removed from its classical source. French is widely spoken throughout the country, as are a variety of Berber dialects. Spanish is common in the north and in the far south. English is also spoken, though for the most part it's limited to major tourist centres.

**Religion:** The vast majority of Moroccans are Muslim. Mosques, identified by towering minarets for those of larger size, can be seen everywhere, from urban and rural areas to the souks of the cities. The Muslim call to prayer is an integral part of the soundtrack to a stay in Morocco.

### TRAVEL TIPS

**Getting There:** Most international flights to Morocco fly into Casablanca. Frequent daily air service connects Casablanca and Marrakech. Direct flights to Marrakech are available from Paris, London, Munich, Lisbon and other major European cities. Please check with your travel agent or through the Internet as new flights are being added all the time.

**Immigration:** Visitors from most countries do not require visas, but a passport valid for at least six months is necessary. Visitors are usually granted a 90-day stamp on entry. However, it is advisable to check with the Moroccan embassy or consulate in your country for further visa information.

**Currency:** The Moroccan currency is the dirham, which is divided into 100 centimes. US\$1 is approximately 9 dirham, subject to daily fluctuation. Hotels, banks and the larger airports will change major currencies, though not always traveller's cheques.

**Credit Cards:** They are generally accepted throughout the country, even in smaller cities and hotels, restaurants and shops. For day-to-day touring and tipping, however, you will need to carry an adequate supply of Moroccan dirham.

**Health:** Morocco is one of Africa's safest countries from a medical standpoint. Normally, vaccinations are not necessary, though you should consult your physician for specific advice. Drink only bottled water. A doctor is on call 24 hours a day at Amanjena.

**Clothing:** Modesty in dress is expected of visitors to Morocco. In winter, daytime temperatures are generally warm. A jacket and sweater, however, are recommended for cool winter and spring evenings.

**Time Difference:** Marrakech is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). There is no Daylight Saving Time in Morocco.

**Electricity:** 220V. Wall outlets take the standard, two-pin European plug.

**Tipping:** A service charge is included at Amanjena. Guests are not expected to tip at the resort. Otherwise, tip as you would anywhere for excellent service.

**Bargaining:** Whether weighing the merits of a carpet or a pair of *babouches* (Moroccan slippers), the art of bargaining is an everyday skill and part of life in Marrakech.

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