Morocco is the latest hotspot for British holiday-makers, according to TripAdvisor, the world’s largest travel guidance platform, recently scoring a 4.56 traveller rating, outshining traditional favourites, including Spain (4.30), as interest in the country, known as the Kingdom of Light, has increased by almost 80%. Morocco’s accommodations, restaurants, and tourist attractions received a higher rating than those of Spain. From the bustling markets of Marrakech to the stunning beaches of Essaouira and Agadir, Morocco offers a unique and unforgettable experience that enchants more and more British travellers each year. In May the Moroccan National Tourism Office (ONMT) announced the introduction of additional flight routes from the UK to cater to growing demand. These include connections from Glasgow to Agadir with EasyJet, and from London to Essaouira and Ouarzazate with Ryanair. Morocco’s easy accessibility from the UK, coupled with its warm climate and affordable prices, makes the Kingdom one of the most attractive choices for UK travellers. The most popular destinations for overnight stays this year include bucket list cities like Marrakech, Agadir, Casablanca, Tangier, Fez, Rabat, Essaouira, and Ouarzazate.

TripAdvisor’s latest report also highlighted the coming travel trends, as respondents opt for short-haul flights with a long-haul feel and destinations where they can experience a completely different culture.

**Morocco Emerges As ‘Top-Class’ Golf Destination**

Morocco comes of age as one of the world’s top golfing destinations.

**Rolling off the Beaten Track**

Lumpy and grumpy it may be, but riding a camel is on most people’s bucket list on a visit to Morocco. But what if you are disabled and can’t climb on to the camel in the first place? Jeremy Schmidt and Erik Neufeld, two Americans living in Fez, sorted that one out.

**Hooray for Mollywood!**

Rip-roaring adventures in the desert dunes—except that early Hollywood black-and-white films never even got the sands of Morocco between their toes!
In 2010 I had one of those “Is this all there is?” moments and so in January 2011 I retired from Real Estate Appraising, sold off all my worldly goods and headed out as a solo traveler in search of a new place to live.

Larry Bosco

MARRAKECH!

I felt a bit of alliteration was called for when I started thinking of Marrakesh. The adjectives I used are all correct...perhaps not all the time or in every corner of the city but overall it is a special place and they apply.

Marrakesh is a city of both old and new and that is part of its charm. On one side of the coin you have the Medina, a densely packed walled-in Medieval city dating back to the Berber Empire. This is the heart of the city, filled with mosques, palaces and gardens as well as being a center for Moroccan traditions.

The city has always attracted celebrities...artist politicians, musicians, fashion designers and movie stars. Winston Churchill came here to paint from the balcony of his room at the Mamounia Hotel in the ‘40s and ‘50s. Alfred Hitchcock and Marlena Dietrick came to make movies. But when Yves Saint Laurent came to Marrakesh in 1966 and stayed it really put the place on the map for the Jet Set. His parties and friends added glitter and glamour to this ancient city. It was YSL that brought me in part to visit Marrakesh. In 2017 a new YSL Museum was opened and I wanted to see the architecture and the collection. The garden unlike anything I have visited before, is filled with palm, cacti, bougainvillea dripping with flowers, fountains and meandering paths. Everywhere is color...bold, vibrant, electric colors on fountains, buildings, walls and pottery. If you are a color person then this use of primary colors and hues from the opposite sides of the color wheel makes this a must see.

Click on the logos to read the articles in full.

Marrakesh Second Best Destination for Sun Around the World

Marrakesh ranked as the second best holiday destination for sun around the world, according to a recent report by French travel and tourism operator Club Med. Considered by many to be the heart of Moroccan tourism, Vogue described the ‘red city’ as a ‘mainstay on lists of the best winter sun destinations,’ featuring Marrakech in it’s list for 2023.

A veritable spice rack in itself, ras el hanout is a rich, colorful aromatic that seasons savory Moroccan dishes such as meats, veggies, couscous, pasta, rice, and stews called tagines,” travel author Laura Ray wrote for Travel Awaits. Jemaa el-Fnaa, one of the most-visited tourist attractions in Marrakesh, is a great place to sample Moroccan street food.

Marrakech Second Best Destination for Sun Around the World

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“Marvellous Marrakech: finding your way around the maze of Morocco’s gem

Famous for its vibrant colour and intoxicating culture, this ancient city has something for all the senses. Here are 15 tips for a perfect break.

The 12 Best Food Cities From Around The World

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Famous for its vibrant colour and intoxicating culture, this ancient city has something for all the senses. Here are 15 tips for a perfect break.
On May 10 this year the Moroccan city of Laayoune on the coast of the Western Sahara and the city of Hollywood, Florida, signed a twinning agreement, strengthening their economic, cultural, educational, and touristic cooperation. A quick search for images of the two cities will show that the Tinsel Town version, with its Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in the shape of a vast guitar as part of its ‘cultural’ offering, will win hands down in the touristic stakes when compared with Laayoune’s, well, nothing at all really other than being ‘where civilization ends and the desert begins beyond its gates for hundreds of kilometers’.

Morocco may not have the cache for film production that Hollywood has, but nevertheless, many big-name, high-profile productions have been made there, mainly at the Atlas Studios in Ouarzazate, the largest film studio in the world. But six decades before Atlas Studios opened its sound stages, Morocco, with its seas of sand dunes, rough-hewn fortresses of red clay, French Foreign Legion enfants terribles with a Gauloises cigarette dangling louchely from the corner of their mouth, was the exotic background for some of the biggest on-screen hits during the heyday of black and white cinema, even though most productions never got a grain of Saharan sand between their toes. So grab a bag of popcorn, settle into your favourite chair, and take yourself back to the heady days of Humphrey Bogart, Marlene Dietrich, Dorothy Lamour, Gary Cooper and a parade of stars of the silver screen.

MOROCCO (1930)
Set on the far side of the world but shot outside Los Angeles, Morocco navigates a labyrinth of melancholy and desire as the cabaret singer Amy Jolly (Marlene Dietrich), fleeing her former life, takes her act to the shores of North Africa, where she entertains the overtures of a wealthy man of the world while finding herself increasingly drawn to a strapping legionnaire with a shadowy past of his own (Gary Cooper). Morocco earned four Academy Award nominations: including Best Actress (Marlene Dietrich). It also made it to #83 on American Film Institute’s list of ‘The 100 Greatest Love Stories Of All-Time’.

THE ROAD TO MOROCCO (1942)
Jeff Peters (Bing Crosby) and Orville (“Turkey”) Jackson (Bob Hope) accidently blow up the ship they have stowed away on and are shipwrecked on the coast of Africa. They subsequently travel to Morocco, where they are stranded in the desert, are kidnapped, and must outrun and outfox various threats, all while Orville and Jeff in turn become engaged to the beautiful Princess Shalmar (Dorothy Lamour). The desert of Morocco is actually the Imperial Sand Dunes in Buttercup Valley, a much-used desert location, famously seen in Star Wars Episode V: Return Of The Jedi.

CASABLANCA (1942)
In the early years of World War II, December 1941, the Moroccan coastal city of Casablanca attracts people from all over the world, particularly Nazi-occupied Europe. Many are transients trying to get out of Europe; a few are just trying to make a buck. Most of them - gamblers and refugees, Nazis, resistance fighters, and plain old crooks - find their way to Rick’s Café Américain, a swank nightclub owned by American expatriate Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart). The film was a solid if unspectacular success in its initial run but these days it consistently ranks near the top of lists of the greatest films in history.

OUTPOST IN MOROCCO (1949)
Captain Gerard (George Raft), greatest lover in the Foreign Legion, is assigned to escort an emir’s daughter to her father’s mountain citadel and find out what he can about the emir’s activities. This is the only film of the era that had scenes actually recorded in Morocco - Bal Achard and Fort Tinihir, the rest being filmed in Yuma, Arizona. The wonderfully scathing review by Bosley Crowther for The New York Times ends, “Despite its Moroccan binding, the contents of this film are pure pulp.”
I’m Inga Aksamit, an award-winning author, globe-trotting adventurer and veteran oncology nurse. My first major expedition was at four years old, clutching Mom’s hand on the tarmac in Northern California before flying to Lahore, West Pakistan to join Dad, who was already engineering a new irrigation project. I emerged as a restless adult after attending 20 schools in four countries.

A CASTLE IN THE HIGH ATLAS MOUNTAINS OF MOROCCO

The idea of being able to stay in a kasbah (castle) in the High Atlas Mountains in Morocco was a temptation I couldn’t resist. I booked a stay at the Kasbah du Toubkal under the shadow of Mt. Toubkal in Imlil before I even knew how my husband, Steve, and I or when we would get there. I thought that if I booked it, we’d find a way.

As our driver wound up the narrow, paved road from Marrakech, we found ourselves in a magical alpine environment that felt oddly disorienting, like we had landed in Tibet. The square, flat-topped adobe houses stacked like Lego blocks clinging to the steep, terraced mountainside gave us a déjà vu feeling. Apple and cherry orchards perfumed the air. It was harvest time in October, and walnut orchards dotted the hillsides between traditional Berber villages. Imlil is a newer village that sprang up to service the needs of tourists who come to take advantage of trekking, climbing and mountaineering activities in the High Atlas Mountains. The trekking crown is 13,665-foot Mt. Toubkal. The mountain rises over Imlil and the Mizane Valley below, sending water coursing from its flanks each spring. This water fills the Rehraya River that courses through central Imlil, ultimately watering the Haouz plain below in Central Morocco.

Around Morocco with MOROCCO WORLD NEWS

Marrakech Witnesses Record-Breaking 63% Surge in Tourist Arrivals in May
Morocco’s red city Marrakech witnessed a remarkable 63% increase in tourist arrivals during May compared to the same period in 2019.

Marrakech, Agadir Shine Among Top Remote Working Destinations in Africa
In addition to its cultural richness, Marrakech offers a variety of co-working spaces that cater to the needs of remote workers.

Morocco’s Mohammed VI Tower Receives Best Engineering Project Award in Madrid
The Caminos Madrid Awards serve as a benchmark distinction in the construction industry.
The only thing worse than going uphill on a camel is going downhill, or at least it is if you don’t count the getting on and off, or the camel standing up to begin your trek, which pales into nothing the first time the animal drops on its front knees for you to dismount. And there’s the bit in the middle, the lumpen swaying as the beast plods along, following the curve of the dunes in its meandering route. Lumpy and grumpy it may be, but riding a camel is on most people’s bucket list on a visit to Morocco.

But what if you are disabled and can’t climb on the camel in the first place? For disabled travellers it was an experience that was invariably going to be out of reach. And then along came Jeremy Schmidt and Erik Neufeld, two Americans living in Fez, who, working with local craftsmen created the world’s first and, until now, only adapted camel saddle.

‘Both Erik and I have relationships with people who have disabilities,’ says Jeremy. ‘When we looked at a place like Morocco, we saw a country with tremendous potential but underdeveloped infrastructure to meet the needs of accessible travel. We knew that it would be a lot of work but felt (and still feel) that Morocco was a strategic place to really make a difference not only for the foreigners who travel here but also for those with disabilities in the local community. ’

They understood how difficult riding a camel would be for someone with limited upper body control, so they went on a mission to create a saddle that anyone could use, regardless of their abilities. As they say on their website, Morocco Accessible Travel Consultants, ‘We’re here to make the impossible possible.’

Man Versus Camel

Corry Lee was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy at two years old, and from his first international trip to the Bahamas at the age of fifteen, he set out to see the world. To date the 33-year-old has travelled to forty-three countries on all seven continents. High on his list of must-do’s was to ride a camel in the Sahara Desert, highly unlikely, he admitted, until he came face-to-face with Jeremy and Erik.

“As a wheelchair user, and as a traveller in general, I consider myself pretty adventurous. I’ve gone hot air ballooning over the Negev Desert in Israel, hiking in the Amazon rainforest and even rock climbing in Utah, but for some reason this camel ride felt like my biggest undertaking yet. After all, riding a camel in the Sahara Desert had been on my bucket list since before the term ‘bucket list’ was even a thing.

“As the camel sat down beside me, I noticed the adaptive saddle on top of it. It’s basically a seat with a full back and headrest — like half a wheelchair sitting on top of the camel. It also has a seatbelt, so I couldn’t fall. After I inspected the adaptive saddle, I felt more confident that this ride might actually be possible.

“When camels stand up, they raise their back legs first, so for a moment it felt like I was falling forward. However, once the camel was completely upright, I took a sigh of relief. I could not believe I was officially riding a camel in the Sahara.”

A sanitised travel experience

In an article for Condé Nast Traveller, Sophie Morgan, a British television presenter and disability advocate who is paraplegic, is clear about the limits of adventurous travel for disabled people.

“Authentic travel experiences are rarely accessible for those of us who navigate the world differently. As a manual wheelchair user and paraplegic of nearly twenty years, I can count on one hand the number of times I have been able to roll off the beaten track. Ours is an often sanitised or watered-down travel experience, adapted to meet our needs, limited by what’s accessible. Real adventures appear reserved for those blessed not only with the means and the attitude but also the ability to go wherever their feet may carry them.”

Putting herself in the hands of Erik and Jeremy with the simple instruction “Show me the best Morocco has to offer,” Sophie eventually finds herself sitting on the edge of the Sahara as the early morning sun breaks over the dunes. “I am reminded to pinch myself. I had always assumed the desert was no place for someone like me. And yet here I am, wrapped in an indigo tagelmust scarf, waiting eagerly for my camel to arrive. Thanks to two visionary travellers with a passion for inclusivity, the Sahara Desert is finally a place where disabled travellers can explore.”
Last month we had a visit from the Rotary Club Marbella Cosmopolitan, Rotary Club Marrakech Koutoubia, and Aspire Mama Africa to our boarding houses. Rotary Club Marbella Cosmopolitan and Aspire Mama Africa have been supporting EFA since August 2021 with the sponsorship of a whole boarding house each. The President of each Rotary Club met with our Committee Member and Treasurer, Juanita Folmsbee to sign an agreement which offers urgent medical assistance and medication to EFA boarding house students and our University students in Marrakech at Clinique Plaza, free of charge. A huge thanks to all involved for this generous support!

Two years, multiple attempts, and countless modifications...dreams realised...the world’s first adapted camel saddle!

I had an amazing experience on holiday however it was really challenging because of my wheelchair in Morocco. I would like to say thank you to Morocco Accessible Travel who arranged my trip and wonderful different places to visit.

Nadia Clarke

You can read more about Cory Lee’s adventures with a camel HERE, and his further adventures in Morocco at his blog

For details of the breathtaking experiences Morocco has to offer for disabled visitors, options for accessible travel, accommodation, guides, almost anything you can think of, click on this link.

For information on planning your trip as a disabled person, including a checklist to help you assess your needs, click on this one.

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Female Students Score the Highest Grades in Morocco’s Baccalaureate

A group of exceptional Moroccan students emerged as the top scorers in various regions across the country, with female students prominently dominating the highest grades.