

ave

Edited by Jane Memmler

Morocco's spice of life



HUSTLE AND BUSTLE: The market stalls in Djemaa El Fna where you can buy local food or watch the entertainment

TINA MORAN cannot wait to return to Marrakech with its stunning mosques, snake-charmers and vibrant markets

WHAT a mesmerising, magical place Marrakech is. I had no idea that in just three hours from grey London you could be immersed in such a colourful, vibrant, sun-soaked city.

To celebrate a birthday and wedding anniversary, my husband Justin and I headed to Marrakech for a four-night trip, with no idea what to expect.

What we discovered was a bustling, rapidly expanding city at the heart of which is the glorious walled Medina with its souks, palaces and riads.

Keen to pack in as many experiences as we could, we went from the airport to Riad Zamzam where we were spending our first night and by 10am were taking part in a cookery class.

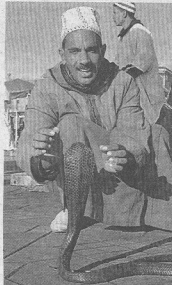
Zamzam's kitchen staff first led us to the nearby market where we bought fresh vegetables and meat. Back in the riad's cool inner courtyard we rustled up assorted salads and a traditional chicken tagine.

Cookery lesson over, we met up with local guide Brahim for an invaluable tour through the labyrinthine lanes of the Medina. Our two-hour walk took us past magnificently carved mosques, museums and market squares and into the frantic world of the souks.

Here, provided you are willing to haggle for every item, you can buy souvenirs from spices and sweets to lanterns, leather goods, rugs

and jewellery. Getting lost amid the miles of shops and stalls is inevitable which is why a guided tour is recommended.

Brahim kept us on a southerly route and after an hour we came to Djemaa El Fna, the Medina's main square where snake-charmers perform alongside magicians and



CHARMING: City's animal magic musicians while locals peddle fresh food and drinks.

We headed to the rooftop balcony of the Café de France for a bird's-eye view of this extraordinary World Heritage site where tourists and locals come in their thousands to marvel at the entertainments

and the delicious food. By late afternoon our early start from Gatwick was taking its toll so we headed back to Zamzam for a drink by the indoor pool. Soon it was time to enjoy the food we had prepared that morning and we opted for dinner on the roof terrace with its marvellous views of the city by night.

A good sleep prepared us for our first full day in Marrakech. After breakfast we took a taxi to the south of the Medina to Dar Les Cigognes, an elegant riad where we were spending our next two nights. Cigognes is French for storks and we could see the birds and their giant nests on the walls of the El Badi Palace opposite.

The morning was spent attempting to find our way, without a guide, through the souks, trying to spot the landmarks Brahim said would help us. We found the main square where we had lunch upstairs at the Alhambra café offering a perfect view of the bustle below.

Later we stumbled across Medersa Ben Youssef school – arguably the city's finest building – Musée de Marrakech and the oldest cinema, although our chances of finding them again were slim.

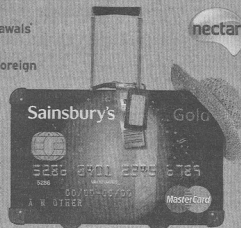
The fest carne when we had to get back to the riad by 4pm for a hammam treatment. We

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

The Sainsbury's Gold Credit Card. Packed full of benefits, wherever you're heading.

Sainsbury's Finance
Makes shopping more rewarding

- No fees on cash withdrawals¹ at home or abroad
- No fees when you buy foreign currency
- No foreign exchange fees on purchases abroad
- Worldwide, multi-trip family travel insurance²
- Nectar points wherever you shop worldwide³



At £5 a month it soon pays for itself.
sainsburysfinance.co.uk/ccexpressgold
 0800 313 4652 quoting EXPRESSGOLD

This is a representative example only, credit limits vary depending on your individual circumstances.

Your purchase rate is	With a representative	Based on borrowing	This card includes a fee of
9.94% p.a. variable	20.1% APR variable	£1,200 and repaying over 12 months	£5.00 per month

New customers only. **When you pay with your Sainsbury's Gold Credit Card. *We won't charge a cash advance fee, some independent cash machine providers may charge. †Travel insurance administered by FirstAssist Insurance Services Limited and underwritten by Great Lakes Reinsurance (UK) PLC. Both companies are authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Travel insurance cover valid for 2 adults and up to 6 children aged under 16 or 23 if they are in full time education. Terms and conditions apply. See website for details. Calls recorded for security purposes and monitored for quality. Credit subject to status to UK residents 18 or over from Sainsbury's Bank plc, Darlington, T16 9Y9 4BS. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Registered number 194844.

Travel



TASTE OF AFRICA: Tina and Justin, inset, had a cookery lesson on arrival at the Riad Zamzam in the heart of Marakech

Oasis within bustling city

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

got lost, rowed and finally jumped in a taxi which also got lost.

Thirty minutes late, we were ready for some pampering. We were scrubbed, showered, oiled and massaged, wiping out memories of our earlier panic.

Nearing the end of our stay, we took an excursion to the Atlas Mountains. There are many trips to choose from depending on time.

We opted for a 90-minute drive to Imllil, a Berber village from where we walked with a local guide for two hours until we reached the impressive Kasbah du Toubkal. Perched above a valley, the Kasbah offers unparalleled views of the mountains.

While we were out of town our bags were transferred from

Cigognes to Riad Kaïss, a gem of a place just a brief walk from the main square. So our day ended with dinner in town and a chance to witness the amazing sight of Djemaa El Fna at night; its rows of food stalls filling the air with smoke and delicious smells.

For our final day we visited the Majorelle Gardens, a botanical masterpiece rescued from ruin by fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent. Before our flight we also squeezed in a quick dash around the lavishly decorated Bahia Palace and a peek inside the Dar Si Saïd museum with its homage to Moroccan crafts and woodwork.

We flew out feeling weary yet invigorated by memories of the dynamic, unique city and vowing to return soon.

THE KNOWLEDGE:

Abercrombie & Kent (0845 618 2213/www.abercrombiekent.co.uk) offers two nights at Riad Kaïss (www.riadkaïss.com) and two nights at Dar Les Cigognes (www.lescigognes.com) from £730pp (two sharing). B&B. Price includes return flights with BA and transfers. Riad Zamzam (dialling from the UK: 00 212 524 387 214/www.riadzamzam.com) offers doubles from £130 per night (two sharing). B&B. Cookery classes at Riad Zamzam including lunch from £56pp and dinner from £73pp. Moroccan National Tourist Office: 0207 437 0073/www.visitmorocco.com

DISCOVER NORTH CYPRUS

ACAPULCO BEACH & SPA RESORT

KYRENIA, NORTH CYPRUS



This package includes
+ FREE Half Board
667 £399