

History

Morocco has been the home of the Berbers since the second millennium B.C. In A.D. 46, Morocco was annexed by Rome as part of the province of Mauritania until the Vandals overran this portion of the declining empire in the 5th century. The ruins at Volubilis mark a Roman city. Volubilis is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the best-preserved Roman ruins in Morocco



The Arabs invaded circa 685, bringing Islam. The Berbers joined them in invading Spain in 711, but then they revolted against the Arabs, resenting their secondary status. In 1086, Berbers took control of large areas of Moorish Spain until they were expelled in the 13th century.



Ibn Battuta explored from Morocco starting in 1325. He traveled, as the map shows, for 29 years. When he returned to Morocco for good in 1354, the country's sultan ordered him to compile a travelogue. He spent the next year dictating his story to a writer named Ibn Juzayy. The result was an oral history called *A Gift to Those Who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Traveling*, better known as the *Rihla* (or "travels"). The book stands as one of the most vivid and wide-ranging accounts of the 14th century Islamic world.

The land was rarely unified and was usually ruled by small tribal states. Conflicts between Berbers and Arabs were chronic. Portugal and Spain began invading Morocco. Portugal built several forts along the coast as this stamp shows. They also built a cistern.



Portugal in 1471 and Spain in 1580 set up trading posts in Morocco. Many battles over control.

In 1660, Morocco came under the control of the Alawite dynasty. It is a Sherif dynasty descended from the prophet Muhammad and rules Morocco to this day.

Britain declared control over Tangier in 1661. Morocco regained control over all in 1684.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Morocco was one of the Barbary States, the headquarters of pirates who pillaged Mediterranean traders. European powers showed interest in colonizing the country beginning in 1840, and there were frequent clashes with the French and Spanish.

In 1787 Morocco's Sultan negotiated a treaty with the new United States.



Morocco was one of the first countries to do this.

“I the underwritten, the Servant of God, Taher Ben Abdelkack Fennish, do certify that His Imperial Majesty my Master (whom God preserve) having concluded a Treaty of Peace and Commerce with the United States of America...”

Morocco Division by France and Spain

In 1904, France and Spain concluded a secret agreement that divided Morocco into zones of French and Spanish influence, with France controlling almost all of Morocco and Spain controlling the Northern part and small southwest portion, which became known as Spanish Sahara.

Morocco grew into an even greater object of European rivalry by the turn of the century, almost leading to a European war in 1905 when Germany attempted to gain a foothold in the mineral-rich country. By the terms of the Algeciras Conference (1906), the sultan of Morocco maintained control of his lands and France's privileges were curtailed. The conference was an indication of what was to come in World War I, with Germany and Austria-Hungary lining up on one side of the territorial dispute, and France, Britain, and the United States on the other.

In 1912, the sultan of Morocco, Moulay Abd al-Hafid, permitted French protectorate status. Nationalism grew during World War II.

In 1924 the city of Tangier was declared an international trade-free zone

Sultan Muhammed V was [Sultan of Morocco](#) from 1927 to 1953; he was recognized as Sultan again upon his return from exile in 1955, and as [King](#) from 1957 to 1961.

Independence

In 1956, France and Spain recognized the independence and sovereignty of Morocco.

At his death on Feb. 26, 1961, Muhammed V's son succeeded him as King Hassan II. In the 1990s, King Hassan promulgated Hassanian democracy, which allowed for significant political freedom while at the same time retaining ultimate power for the monarch.



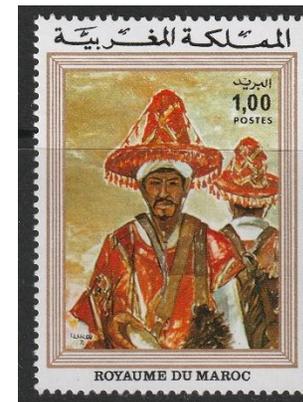
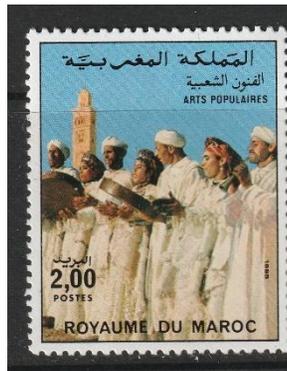


In Aug. 1999, King Hassan II died after 38 years on the throne and his son, Prince Sidi Muhammed, was crowned King Muhammed VI. Since then, Muhammed VI has pledged to make the political system more open, allow freedom of expression, and support economic reform. He has also advocated more rights for women, a position opposed by Islamic

fundamentalists. The entrenched political elite and the military have also been leery of some reform proposals. With about 20% of the population living in dire poverty, economic expansion is a primary goal.



Moroccans have no problem with the showing of persons. They are quite liberal. They also like to show landmarks, historic sites, native costumes and festivals and dancing. Handmade Moroccan rugs and tapestries are also a craft and are quite beautiful.



In 1857 the British set up an agency for British citizens and businesses in several locations including Tangier. British stamps were overprinted. They closed their agencies in 1957.



The Spanish also issued stamps for Spanish Morocco from 1903 to 1955. I don't have any of the 459 stamps they issued. They also issued 67 stamps for Tangier and Tetuan.



The Germans also set up an agency using overprinted German stamps from 1899 to 1911 with Spanish currency. After WWI they were closed.

Collecting all these overprints and varieties is a challenge. Not expensive but hard to locate dealers with them.

My Experiences in Morocco

Our family lived in French Morocco from December 1954 to June 1958. My Dad was the base Finance officer and had many friends save stamps for me.

Nouasseur AFB was a supply depot for Europe. The Cold War was a concern, so lots of equipment was stored including nuclear bombs. B36 bombers and then B52s and F102 fighters were based here.

For the first year and a half we lived in a villa in Casablanca. We lived on the second floor with stairs outside. First floor was another AF family. Behind us was our French owner who built the villa and added the second floor, and his family living in renovated animal stables. The villa had a high wall topped with broken glass around it, with a gate to an inner court where we parked our cars and a streetside garage. A Berber family lived in the back of the garage and operated a small convenience store in the front of the garage where they sold everything including tanks of propane.

Heating was by portable kerosine heaters. Water was supplied in lead pipes along the base of the walls. The kitchen sink and the bathroom had an instant propane water heater that provided hot water as requested. Electricity was cables running along the walls for outlets and switches and then up to the lights. All very basic but workable. We had a maid and gardener. Under the outside stairs was a space to store our bikes.

Every weekday morning a school bus arrived to pick us up and take us to Nouasseur Air Force Base, about a 30 minute ride. Living in town and exploring it was easy. Arabic and French were the main languages although English was also available. I'd ride my bicycle into the local marketplace to buy fresh French bread, cheese, melons, oranges, etc.

I'd bike down into town where there were two stamp dealers that helped me grow my Morocco stamp collection. The town post office was also a place to get new issues.

In 1956 we moved to villas in base housing. Cinderblock houses with three bedrooms, kitchen, dining area, living room, bathroom and carport. Was able to walk to school. Had a garden in the back.

I attended 8th thru 11th grade and had very good teachers. Our French teacher made us speak French most of the time. Had no teaching of Arabic language, reading or writing. We learned Arabic by interacting with our gardener and maid.

Followed the World News via shortwave Voice of America and BBC and a daily AF newspaper.

For our first two years the country was French Morocco ruled by the French and the Sultan. In 1956 after a revolt by the Moroccans the French gave them their independence. We then lived in Morocco ruled by Sultan Sidi Mohamed V. The US closed Nouasseur AFB in 1963 and gave the facility to the Moroccans who converted it to Mohammed V International Airport. The villas were converted into a town and given to the base Moroccan workers and their families.

