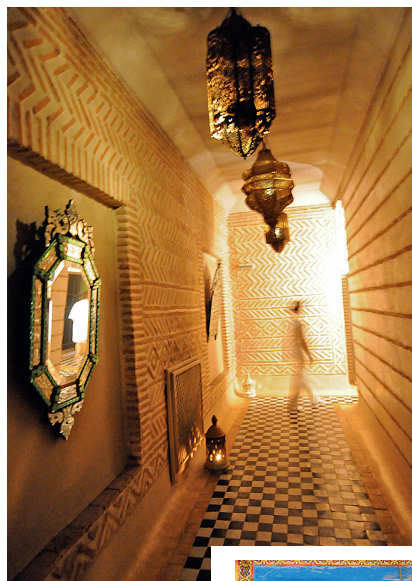


Tips from the top



Watch the sunset from the Palmeraie area of Marrakech. It's to the east of the city and its views are fringed by palm trees. For a real treat, dine at the sultry Jnane Tamsna hotel, then take a camel ride into the desert for sunset (jnane tamsna.com; set menu about £31; camel-ride £28).

For a laid-back city break, I'd choose Essaouira. There's a fantastic souk there and it's on the Atlantic, so the beaches are beautiful. Stay at Villa Maroc in the medina, which is very chic and has fantastic food (villa-maroc.com; doubles from £100, B&B).

Taghazout is like North Cornwall in Morocco. It's just north of Agadir and

has the same shabby-chic style. There are some good family hotels right on the beach, such as Paradis Plage (paradisplage.com; doubles from £90, B&B).

Want the feel of Marrakech before it was famous? Go to Taroudant, a little over an hour's drive from Agadir. People will greet you as soon as you arrive and won't leave your side until you visit their uncle's carpet shop. We stayed at Dar al Hossoun — its garden just about manages to upstage the peacocks (al hossoun.com; doubles from £76, B&B).

Mint tea might be more famous, but I say try a Moroccan coffee. You can get it in any of the cafes off Djemaa El Fna in Marrakech, where they grind it with nutmeg, cloves and a bit of cinnamon.

Ben stars in Sticks and Stones, airing on ITV this December. His children's book The Boy Who Made the World Disappear is out now. ■

Secret Morocco

By Ben Miller

The *Armstrong & Miller* actor and comedian, who has a house in Morocco, reveals his favourite local finds

People-watch, Marrakech style, at Terrasse des Epices. It's a stylish rooftop restaurant just near the city's spice market, which does a fantastic *fattoush* salad (terrassedeseepices.com; mains about £12). In the cooler months, I borrow a *djellaba* (long tunic) from staff, sit on the roof and feel like a proper local.

Really determined shoppers should head to Marrakech's 'industrial zone'. That's where anyone who knows the city goes to buy the things everyone else gets in the souk. I particularly like a perfumery called Les Sens de Marrakech (lessensdemarrakech.fr). I also go to an amazing flea market called Bab El Khemis, held in the northwestern corner of the medina every Thursday.

If you love gardens, the Anima Garden is stunning. It's by the Austrian artist André Heller and is about half an hour from Marrakech (anima-garden.com; £10). It feels very African.

Get out on the town with dinner at Comptoir Darna. It does delicious traditional tagines and has a fantastic belly-dancing show (uk.comptoirmarrakech.com; mains about £16).

The best hammams is at Beldi Country Club, 10 minutes' drive from central Marrakech. It's not actually a country club, but a lovely rustic hotel (beldicountryclub.com; doubles from £170, B&B). Non-guests can pay to have lunch and a swim (£32pp).

Viewpoint: from top, the beach at family-friendly Taghazout; the Beldi Country Club just outside Marrakech; typical doorway in Essaouira

'I BORROW A LONG TUNIC FROM THE STAFF, SIT ON THE ROOF AND FEEL LIKE A PROPER LOCAL'