

Morocco

Morocco, officially Kingdom of Morocco (Royaume du Maroc, El Reino de Marruecos, Das Königreich Marokko), kingdom (1954 est. pop. 40,161,000), 171,834 sq mi (900,050 sq km), NW Africa, bordered by the Mediterranean Sea (N), the Atlantic Ocean (W), Mauritania, and Algeria (E). Principal cities include Rabat (the capital), Casablanca, Marrakech, and Fes. The Atlas Mts., rising to 13,671 ft (4,167 m) in Jebel Toubkal in the southwest, dominate most of the country.

In the south lie the sandy wastes of the Sahara desert, but in the north is a fertile coastal plain, home of most of the population. Agriculture and mining are economic mainstays. Morocco is a leading producer and exporter of phosphates; other important minerals include iron ore, copper, lead, zinc, cobalt, manganese, and coal. Food processing and the manufacture of leather goods and textiles are also important. Half the labor force is employed in agriculture, growing cereals, citrus fruits, and vegetables. Tourism and fishing also contribute to the economy. Most Moroccans are of mixed Arab-Berber descent and are Muslim; Islam is the state religion. There are small Christian and Jewish minorities. Arabic is the official language; Berber dialects, French (a main language of commerce), and Spanish are also spoken. {mosgoogle}