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Casablanca's spectacular Hassan II Mosque, built in 1993, sits along the Moroccan city's Atlantic oceanfront. Photo: iStock/Getty Images Plus

TRAVEL

The 21 Best Places to Visit in Casablanca

The marvelous Moroccan city is an overlooked design-lover's fantasy, with treasure-abundant markets, unparalleled architecture, and a booming art and music scene

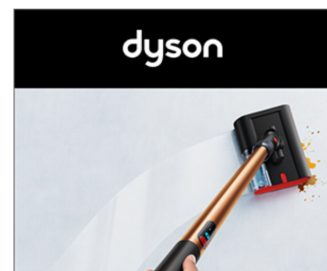
By Liza Foreman and Kelly Allen

April 30, 2026

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Discovery and inspiration await in Casablanca, where leafy boulevards are lined by a diverse blend of [architectural styles](#) and lively markets are filled with treasures plucked from old villas and handcrafted by artisans. Yet “Casa,” as the locals call it, is often overlooked by tourists, with their sights set on Marrakech or Tangier, despite Casablanca’s reign as Morocco’s most populous city. “As a financial hub of Africa, Casablanca is attracting young Moroccans but is not yet on the average tourist’s radar,” says Issam Elhadri, founder of [Adventures Morocco](#) and a Moroccan tour guide with 21 years of experience. But [the city](#) is a remarkable contender for precious itinerary space. “It’s the beating heart of




Morocco's art scene, with street art and galleries at every turn and a growing café culture," adds Elhadri.


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One reason to visit: The city beams with vibrant energy that's woven into its DNA. "Casablanca was the most creative of all the cities of France's empire," notes eminent historian Jean-Louis Cohen, coauthor of the book *Casablanca: Colonial Myths and Architectural Ventures*. "It's laid out according to an imaginative plan, with beautiful parks and striking architecture, from late Art Nouveau and Art Deco to radically modern."



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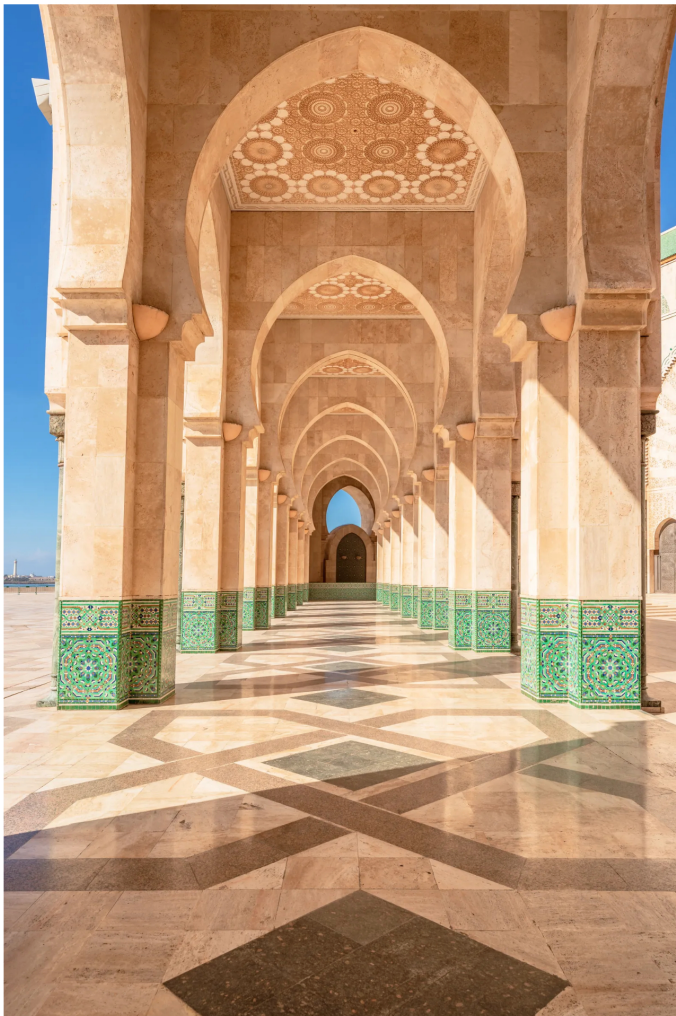
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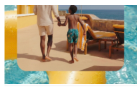
An arched corridor at the Mosque Hassan II. Sergio Formoso

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Along the Corniche—the beach promenade—the 1993 **Hassan II Mosque**, designed by French architect Michel Pinseau, stands as a breathtaking beacon. As the only **mosque** in Morocco open to non-Muslims (every day except for Fridays), the site is a must-visit. Many of the city’s once-neglected buildings have been refurbished and protected thanks to **Casamémoire**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Morocco’s 20th-century architecture. Concurrently, gleaming shopping centers and luxury condos have sprung up everywhere, including on the site of the airport depicted in the 1942 film *Casablanca*. (Though the Bogart-Bergman classic was shot on Hollywood backlots, its noirish romance does linger in certain quarters here—namely, at **Rick’s Café**, situated in a courtyard-style mansion where familiar interiors feel like stepping right into the Oscar-winning picture.) And in preparation for major sporting events, including the 2030 FIFA World Cup, the city’s roughly **\$540 million overhaul** of the old port features an expanded cruise terminal to accommodate more travelers by ship.

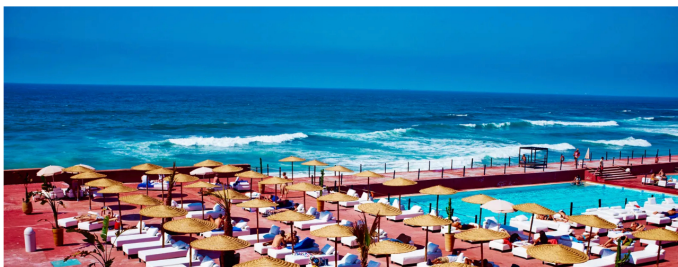
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The Jean Cocteau room at the Le Doge Hotel and Spa. Photo: Tuul & Bruno Morandi / Getty Images

“This city is one of those rare jewels, a place with endless interwoven layers,” says London-born, Casablanca-based writer Tahir Shah. “There’s been a huge push by His Majesty King Mohammed VI to make it a real cultural and economic destination.” Casablanca’s growing collection of commendable hotels encompasses the **Royal Mansour Casablanca**, which reopened in 2024 following a gut renovation. While anchored in modernity, the 149-room luxury hotel maintains the 1950s structure’s character. Plus, it houses four restaurants of varying cuisines, including a local-favorite rooftop spot serving Mediterranean food with a side of ocean views. Currently, **the Lincoln**, a 1917 Moorish-Deco landmark that had long been empty and crumbling, is being rebuilt as a five-star property set to open in **late 2026**. Other highly recommended options include the fantastical **Le Doge**, a boutique property in a restored villa; the **Four Seasons Hotel Casablanca**, set in the multiuse Norman Foster-designed Anfa Place; and the **Imperial Casablanca Hotel & Spa** in the landmark 1934 Shell building.



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One of the many beach clubs on the Corniche. Photo: Tuul and Bruno Morandi / Getty images

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Just down the Corniche from the Four Seasons is the seafood restaurant [Le Cabestan](#), a standby from 1927 that's a favorite of both American garden designer Madison Cox, who lives in Tangier, and Paris-based actor Gad Elmaleh, who grew up in Casablanca. Art-book publisher Malika Slaoui recommends [Sqala Café Maure](#), which offers tagines and grillades in a renovated fortress. According to Elmaleh, [Iloji](#) is worth a visit for Japanese food with French and Moroccan influences.

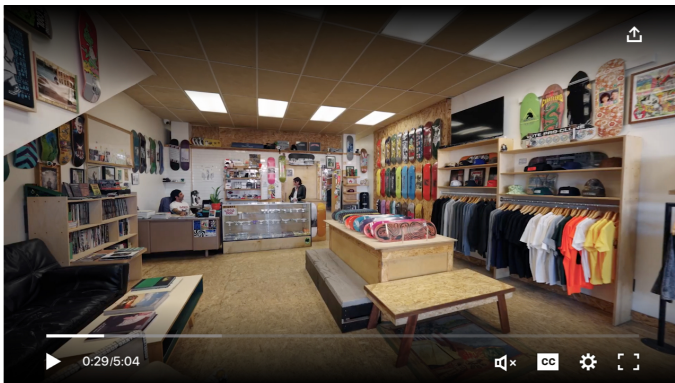
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If Casablanca has a center, it might be the Marché Central, where food stalls jostle with [antiques](#) dealers. According to Elhadri, the outdoor market in the heart of the Art Deco district dates back to 1912 and serves many local dishes including horse steak. Food stalls [Chez Malika](#) and [Chez Zoubida](#) are both favored by Elmaleh for their fresh crab and Oualidia oysters. Shah always heads for the antiques shop [Mon Grenier](#), which owner Abdellatif Bellamine keeps piled high with offbeat finds. For vintage pieces, Shah also likes to trawl the retro-furniture stands at [Soco de Moïna](#), the flea market in the city's Hay Hassani neighborhood.



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One of the fish sellers in the Marché Central Photo: Dave Stamboulis / Getty

Elsewhere in the city, design enthusiasts can find more treasures to bring home. Take a worthwhile stroll through the Habous neighborhood, Elhadri says, as the quarter features souq stalls brimming with handcrafted rugs, clothes, ceramics, spices, and more. For luxurious linens, stop by **La Maison de Blanc**. According to Cox, the store has “been selling to the Royal Palace since the 1950s.”

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Anyone enamored with Moroccan craft and design should also visit the **Musée de la Fondation Abderrahman Slaoui**, which features everything from 19th-century gold jewelry to vintage travel posters. Opened in 2012, the museum is part of a thriving arts scene that includes **Galerie Shart**, which specializes in rising Moroccan talent. The city’s contemporary-arts center, **Villa des Arts**, is set in a majestic 1930s mansion renovated by architect and former Casamémoire president Rachid Andaloussi.



An example of Art Deco architecture in Mers Sultan square. Photo: Tuul & Bruno Morandi / Getty Images



Before journeying to Casablanca, always look up local events. “Almost every month, there’s a major event and a lot are free admission, including **Jazzablanca**, a great jazz festival with a lineup of artists from Morocco and other parts of the world and other genres of music too,” says Elhadri, adding that the music festival “**L’boulevard** is the greatest art event held in les abattoirs, old slaughterhouses turned into art spaces to promote local young and upcoming artists.”

With a little something for everyone, Casablanca beckons curious minds to linger for an enriching exploration beyond a quick stopover. So here’s looking at you, future Casablanca traveler.



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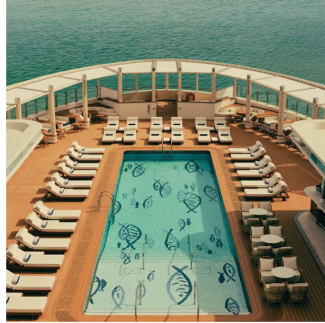
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