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DESTINATIONS NORTH AFRICA



OF THE
BEST

NEW
HOTELS IN
MOROCCO

Emily Bamber checks out hotels perfect for every occasion, from romantic getaways to house parties

Celebrities are no strangers to Morocco, dropping in year-round for mini breaks and to check out the first-class hotels.

Banyan Tree brand Angsana opened a collection of riads in the medina last year and Four Seasons, Mandarin Oriental and Rocco Forte will open big properties in the next two years. Cadogan Holidays, meanwhile, has just released its first Morocco brochure.

Head of product and commercial Doug Mathieson said: "The boutique market is growing fast, and the quality of this sector is putting pressure on the big hotel chains."

As this selection shows travellers to Morocco have never had it so good.

1. Best for couples: Angsana Riads Collection

WHERE? A collection of riads dotted around the medina in Marrakesh.

SPECIAL BECAUSE: Each riad has a private home feel and individual décor inspired by Moroccan and Asian art. All six riads have spa treatment facilities, and the Banyan Tree spa treatments start at £30 for an Indian head massage.

OPENED: December 2007

SELL IT TO: Sophisticated couples looking for peace and romance.
BOOK IT: Tel +212 24 42 19 79; angsana.com/marrakech
SAMPLE PACKAGE: Classic Collection has three nights at Angsana Riad Aida, which also has a rooftop spa tent for couples, for £487 per person including return flights and transfers in July.



2. Best for celebrity spotting: The Palace and the Villas, Es Saadi Gardens and Resort

WHERE? Set in 19 acres of tropical gardens a few minutes from Marrakesh's medina.

SPECIAL BECAUSE: The sumptuous new 90-suite palace has views of the Atlas Mountains and each suite has up to 210sq metres of floor space. The 10 one and two-bedroom villas in the grounds have private pools and butlers. A spa and children's club opens later this year.

OPENED: December 2007
SELL IT TO: Rich clients looking for luxury in elegant surroundings
BOOK IT: Tel +212 24 44 88 11; essaadi.com. Rooms start at £362 per person per night.

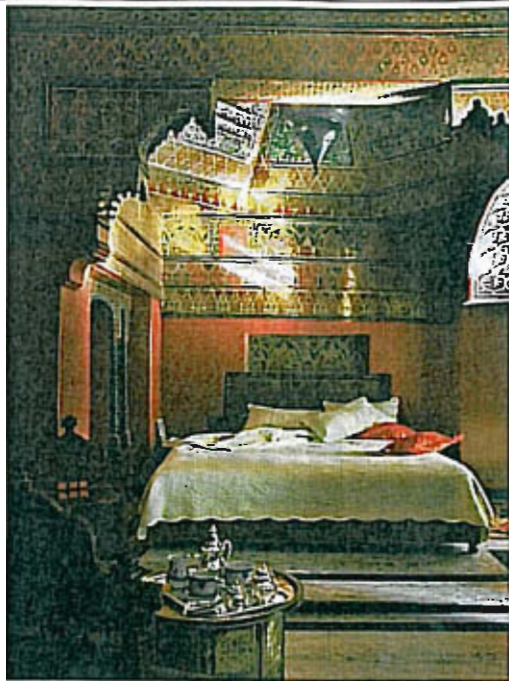
SAMPLE PACKAGE: Kirker Holidays has seven nights' bed and breakfast at the five-star Es Saadi Palace from £1484 per person in early October, including return flights and private transfers.

3. Best for ocean views: La Sultana Oualidia

WHERE? South of Casablanca in a sheltered lagoon.

FAST FACTS

UK A-listers flock to Morocco. Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger owns a home in Marrakesh, and footballers John Terry, Frank Lampard and Rio Ferdinand have all bought property in the north of the country. Other celebrity visitors include Naomi Campbell, Kate Moss, Sienna Miller and Dame Judi Dench



SPECIAL BECAUSE: The sea air and Atlantic views have a restorative, calming effect. The 11 rooms have balconies with saltwater whirlpools, and each one features unusual pieces of artwork. There is also a spa with a hammam.

SELL IT TO: Escape artists
OPENED: April 2007
BOOK IT: Tel: +212 24 38 80 08; lasultanaoualidia.com. Rooms from £236 per night including breakfast
SAMPLE PACKAGE: Carrier has seven nights' bed-and-breakfast accommodation at La Sultana Oualidia from £1,665 per person, including return flights and transfers, in October.

All rooms at La Sultana Oualidia have balconies with saltwater whirlpools

4. Best for golf: Samanah Country Club

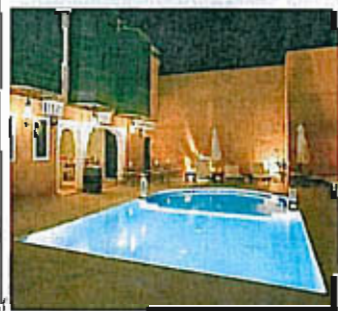
WHERE? In the foothills of the Atlas Mountains just

nine miles from Marrakesh.
SPECIAL BECAUSE: This will be Morocco's first golf resort. The 18-hole course designed by golfer Jack Nicklaus will form the focal point of the resort, which will also feature three five-star hotels plus a separate spa at its heart.
SELL IT TO: Golfers looking for professional courses and accompanying facilities not too far from Marrakesh.
OPENS: End of 2008
BOOK IT: samanah.co.uk

5. Best for house parties: Dar Kantzaro

WHERE? On the outskirts of Marrakesh in a 2.5-acre olive grove facing the Atlas Mountains.
SPECIAL BECAUSE: This impeccable country house hotel is filled with furniture imported from the Far East and has six bedrooms, including two suites. It also has a restaurant, honesty bar, hammam, treatment rooms and a pool. A self-sufficient group couldn't ask for more.

SELL IT TO: Small groups looking to take over a property without spending a fortune.
OPENED: December 2007
BOOK IT: Tel +212 78 55 65 75; darkantzaro.com. Rates from £62 per person per night bed and breakfast. **SAMPLE PACKAGE:** Cadogan Holidays has seven nights' bed and breakfast including flights and transfers from £592 per person. **TW**



Dar Kantzaro pool and spa building

