Important Names & Addresses

The Learning Abroad Center provides a full range of services from preliminary program advising to assistance with re-entry. Do not hesitate to contact any of the Learning Abroad Center staff with your questions. Prior to departure, please direct all questions to the Learning Abroad Center. Friends and family members should always contact the Learning Abroad Center, not the on-site staff, for assistance, even once you are overseas.

In the United States:
Learning Abroad Center
University of Minnesota
230 Heller Hall
271 19th Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0430
Phone: 612.626.9000
Fax: 612.626.8009
Toll Free: 888.700.UOFM
Email: UMabroad@umn.edu
Web: UMabroad.umn.edu

Main contact:
Lindsey Lahr, lahr0039@umn.edu, 612.625.8827

Secondary contact:
Heidi Soneson, sones001@umn.edu, 612.625.2571

Emergencies
In case of a serious emergency, contact the Learning Abroad Center at 612.626.9000. If it is after business hours, a recording will give you a number to call. The Learning Abroad Center has someone on call for emergencies and to contact the on-site administrators if needed. Once overseas, participants should contact their in-country program staff.

In Morocco
Telephone Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00</td>
<td>International access code from the US. The code from other countries will probably be different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212</td>
<td>Morocco’s country code used for dialing from outside Morocco.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Fez city code. Not necessary for calls within Fez. Cell phones have a different code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00</td>
<td>International access code from Morocco.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time Differences
Morocco is five hours ahead of Minnesota during the winter and six hours ahead during the months when the US is on daylight saving time.

Your Address in Morocco
During your stay in Fez, mail should be sent to you at the following address:
Your name (clearly spelled out)
c/o The Arabic Language Institute in Fez
B.P. 2136
Fez 30000, Morocco

On-Site Office
The Arabic Language Institute in Fez (ALIF)
2 Rue Ahmd Hiba, Fez
Phone: (212.35) 62.48.50
Email: info@alif-fes.com

Resident Director
Abellatif Jai
The Arabic Language Institute in Fez
2 Rue Ahmd Hiba, Fez
Phone: (212.35) 62.48.50
Mobile: (212.66)16.16.013
Email: abdellatifjai@aca.org.ma

David Amsler
Director, ALIF

Know Before You Go
Before you leave the country, make sure that you have read and understood the information in your Confirmation Checklist, Online Orientation, this handbook, and the Learning Abroad Center’s policies—UMabroad.umn.edu/students/policies. These materials will guide you on a safe and successful learning abroad experience.

Friends & Family Resources
Valuable resources for your friends and family members can be found at UMabroad.umn.edu/parents. Topics such as health and safety, program prices, logistics, and travel are discussed.

Program Health & Safety
Program health and safety information is available at http://global.umn.edu/gosafe/index.html.
Preparation & Planning

Documents

Passport
A valid passport is required to enter Morocco and to re-enter the US. You also need a passport in order to receive a visa. For information on applying for a passport, see the Learning Abroad Center website: UMabroad.umn.edu.

Passport processing typically takes eight weeks, so plan ahead. Your passport is a valuable document. Do not lose it. You cannot leave your host country without it. It is always wise to have a copy of your passport in a separate location and one copy at home in case your passport is lost or stolen. The process of replacing a passport is much easier if you have a copy of it. If your passport is lost or stolen, you should notify your on-site staff, the local police, and the US embassy in Morocco.

Visa Information
Students traveling on a US passport do not need to apply in advance to study in Morocco. The on-site staff will assist in getting students the proper documentation to remain in country for the duration of your program as necessary. ALIF staff will discuss visa requirements at the orientation in Fez. It is possible that some airline ticket agents may erroneously ask you to show a copy of a student visa to travel to Morocco at the US airport. Be sure to print and bring with you a copy of the Embassy of Morocco’s visa page at www.moroccansconsulate.com/visa.cfm.

US Embassy
For information on the local US Embassy in Morocco, visit the following website: http://usembassy.state.gov.

Power of Attorney
We strongly encourage you to designate someone as your Power of Attorney while you are abroad. Your Power of Attorney can act as your legal representative in a number of situations. Review the information on the website at: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/policies/finances/powerofattorney.

Your Address
In order to ensure that all official communication and billing information is sent to the correct address while you are abroad, check your official contact information prior to departure. Visit www.onestop.umn.edu to verify that the information is correct. If your contact information changes, you must notify the Learning Abroad Center.

Packing
Think about laundry. Lighter colors help you stay cool, but darker colors show dirt less; you might wish to strike a happy medium. Include lightweight fabrics that can be easily hand-washed, can hold up to repeated washing, and do not need ironing. A key question for choosing clothes: How long does it take to air dry?

Pack clothing that is relatively new, both to be sure it lasts through your time overseas and because you will feel uncomfortably out of place if you wear ripped, baggy, or faded clothes. This is especially true for women.

While many Americans think of the hot, dry heat of the Sahara desert when they think of Morocco, few foreigners realize that Morocco is more than capable of some truly cold weather. During the winter months, it is not uncommon for Morocco to see sharp drops in temperatures accompanied by biting winds and rain. Since many Moroccan households are open air and central heating is rare, it is important for students to bring some warm clothing, especially those students who will be studying abroad during the spring semester. Academic year students will want to be sure to pack warmer clothes for the period between fall and spring semester when winter is at its coldest. See packing list for suggestions. In addition to cold weather, rain seen during the spring months can bring a great deal of humidity to Fez. Due to this humidity, students may wish to bring some sort of airtight container for storing important documents that may be damaged by the humidity.

When packing footwear, keep in mind the streets of Fez vary greatly. The medina, as a purely walking city, has only streets of packed earth made smooth from centuries of use, with an occasional old cobblestone pathway. Footing may be tricky, and reliable walking shoes are advised. Also noteworthy are the sidewalk conditions in the Ville Nouvelle. The sidewalks often stand a foot higher than the paved road and are made of glaze clay tiles, some cracked or broken. These sidewalks are slick in any condition but very slippery when it rains. For safety reasons, make sure you pick shoes with plenty of traction.

Be conservative. Some clothing that is common on a US campus would be considered provocative in Morocco. If you wish to pack a running outfit, choose athletic pants or shorts that extend to the knee. Do not plan on using shorts except when you go to the beach. Students should wear short-sleeved shirts or a shirt with sleeves that reach the elbows. Women tend to wear skirts in rural areas of Morocco, and although you may wear slacks without offending, in some rural settings you may look a bit out of place.

Choose your luggage wisely. Most students prefer backpacks to suitcases. Buy a high-quality backpack/daypack. Can your smaller backpack/suitcase nest inside a larger one? Will your carry-on double for weekend travel?
Anticipate possible delays (or even losses) in checked baggage when packing your carry-on. Pack in your carry-on anything that you would need during your first two or three days in-country, including prescription drugs, as well as small items that are fragile, irreplaceable, or of significant monetary value. Do not take scissors, knives, etc., in your carry-on.

Remember you can buy things in-country, including clothing. You will find many clothing items to be cheaper in-country than in the US. However, other products, such as batteries, personal hygiene products, feminine products, etc. that you are accustomed to are often more expensive in these countries and not always readily available.

Don’t take the kitchen sink. The most consistent hindsight of returned students is “I took too much.” Be selective. Decide what and how much is really essential to you. Try to get by with one large backpack and a carry-on. Many savvy travelers recommend that you pack once, try walking around the block with all your stuff, and then begin eliminating things until you can do it comfortably.

Refer to the packing list at the end of this guide for more details.

Health & Safety

Health

The website of the Centers for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov/travel, provides extensive information and advice on immunizations and on staying healthy in Morocco. Another good site is Travel Health Online at www.tripprep.com.

Keep in mind that it is illegal to ship medication overseas, and any packages that are held at customs abroad will require payment of a high import tax before they are released. Bring all necessary medication (including such items as birth control) with you to your study abroad site.

Fez has good doctors and medical facilities, and care may be quite satisfactory in some other major cities as well. Only rudimentary levels of care, at best, tend to be available in villages and small towns. It is important that you inform yourself prior to departure what precautions to take while living in Morocco. If you find yourself in need of care, consult with ALIF staff to find qualified, English-speaking physicians in Fez. Remember that with your international health insurance you will likely be required to pay for all medical services, in cash, in advance, and submit for reimbursement afterward.

We strongly encourage you to consult with a travel physician or travel nurse long before departure. Find a health provider with a specialization in travel medicine; most general practitioners lack the requisite knowledge. Do this as early as possible, for some immunization series begin many months before departure. For UMN students, Boynton Health Services has a travel clinic.

Following consultation with a travel health specialist, you will need a number of immunizations. Ensure that these are recorded in your international immunization record, a yellow card that you will want to keep with your passport. Consult the CDC website (http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/morocco) for updated information regarding immunization requirements and recommendations for Morocco.

A Few Additional Tips

• Avoid eating in restaurants with poor hygiene or buying food from street vendors, particularly melons and cherries. Assure yourself that food is well cooked. Avoid uncooked fruits or vegetables unless you can peel them yourself.
• Wash your hands frequently.
• Tap water is not recommended to drink in Morocco. Tap water in Fez’s Ville Nouvelle is usually safe, but tap water in the medina should not be consumed. Drink boiled or bottled water (either carbonated or non-carbonated). Soft drinks are usually safe, but beware of juices that may be diluted with tap water. When purchasing bottled water from street vendors, check to make sure the safety seal is unbroken.
• Ice is as unsafe as water. Never add it to drinks unless it has been made from boiled or bottled water.
• Take your own medicines with you.
• If you travel to high altitudes, avoid intense exercise until you have adapted. Drink lots of liquids and eat lots of carbohydrates. Monitor any symptoms of altitude sickness, which can include headaches and nausea.
• Do not pet the stray cats in Fez! While they may look cute and cuddly, a bite or scratch may transmit an infection requiring medical attention.

Safety

The on-site staff receive all new or revised State Department travel advisories. The office in Minnesota forwards relevant bulletins to the in-country staff, who share them with students. Read them carefully. The most recent travel information for every country of the world is also posted at http://travel.state.gov. The on-site staff also keep in touch with the US Consulate in times of political unrest or natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes.
As a city that values tradition, Fez has far less to offer in terms of nightlife than cities like Marrakesh or Casablanca. After dark, Moroccans begin to empty the streets, and by about nine o’clock most stores are shut down. Use caution when going out after dark. While guns are outlawed in Fez, pickpocketing, muggings, and other crimes are not unheard of. Avoid going out alone at night in Fez, and do not loiter. If you need to go somewhere, make sure you’re accompanied by a member of your host family or a friend, and go directly to your destination.

A few other tips to enjoy Fez:

- Travel in groups as often as possible (especially true for females).
- Do not accept “tours” from illegal guides. Moroccan tour guides have official documents distinguishing them from illegal, or faux guides. While prosecution is rare, it is illegal to accept a tour from an unlicensed guide.
- Do not trust your valuables to anyone other than the administrators at the ALIF center. The ALIF center has a safe where you may store valuables.
- Avoid dark alleyways, and be wary of your valuables in crowded streets.
- Do not give your credit or debit card number to anyone, including your host family.
- If at any time you feel that you are in danger, contact the program administrators at the ALIF center using the emergency numbers provided to you.
- The summer Ramadan period can be stressful for locals, and you should be particularly alert during this period and cautious with your belongings in public.
- Do not display your cell phone or laptop in public places.
- Do not accept “tours” from illegal guides. Moroccan tour guides have official documents distinguishing them from illegal, or faux guides. While prosecution is rare, it is illegal to accept a tour from an unlicensed guide.
- Do not trust your valuables to anyone other than the administrators at the ALIF center. The ALIF center has a safe where you may store valuables.

Sexual Harassment & Sexual Assault

Do not tolerate behavior that feels threatening or disrespectful by staff in-country or faculty members, or homestay family members. When in any doubt, consult with an on-site staff or faculty member with whom you feel comfortable. Immediately report any incidents of sexual harassment or sexual assault to the in-country staff member with whom you feel most comfortable.

Health Insurance

All students enrolled at the University of Minnesota are required to have US health insurance. This includes students registered for education abroad. For more details and specific process information for students with University of Minnesota Student Health Insurance through the Student Health Benefits Office, visit the Learning Abroad Center’s US Insurance webpage: UMinneapolis.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/intlhealthinsurance/healthinsurancerequirement.

In addition to your US health insurance, the University has contracted with Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) to provide comprehensive international travel, health, and security insurance. This coverage is mandatory for all students and included in the program fee. You are covered by CISI only for the dates of the program. If you plan to travel before or after your program you should extend your CISI coverage or purchase your own insurance.

CISI does not include any preventive care, and individuals are advised to consult their medical providers for any check-ups or preventive care prior to departure.

Your CISI card and insurance policy will be emailed directly to you. Carry the card with you at all times. If you have any questions or need additional information about CISI, visit the Learning Abroad Center’s insurance webpage: UMinneapolis.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/intlhealthinsurance.

Considerations during Planning

Once you arrive at your homestay, you will have opportunities to explore your new neighborhood. Make sure to pay attention to the route from your host family’s house to the nearest taxi station or ALIF. Before setting out from your homestay, make sure you have a key. If you are not provided with a key, speak with the on-site staff at ALIF. Also, know an address or major nearby landmark to direct taxi drivers, should you get lost and need to take one home. If communication is easy for you and your host family, it’s a good idea to ask them good routes to take, and what routes to avoid when coming home.

Women’s Issues in Morocco

As you venture out on your own, keep in mind the cultural differences of public life in the United States versus Morocco. In Morocco, women rarely go out without a companion, either female or male. Moroccan men see no problem catcalling foreign women, approaching them on the street, or attempting to make conversation. However, this is not acceptable, and responding will often lead to more pronounced sexual advances. The best advice is to ignore these attempts, since any acknowledgement will likely encourage them. Looking purposeful, not making eye contact, and wearing dark sunglasses will all help avoid unwanted attention.

While you are likely to stick out as a foreigner no matter what, dressing similarly to Moroccan women potentially mitigate some of the catcalling in the street. Moroccan women are very conservative, but also very formal. Blouses, dresses, and trousers are their normal attire.

Also see the section “Women in Morocco” near the end of this booklet, as well as the ALIF guidebook for more suggestions for women’s safety in Morocco.

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Issues

Attitudes toward sexuality vary greatly from country to country. Some cultures are open about homosexuality, and
strong gay communities exist in many cities. However, some cultures and peoples are intolerant of different sexual preferences, and strict taboos or laws against such relationships may exist. Although individuals do have different sexual orientations in Morocco, it is not a topic for public display or conversation and will be offensive to host family members.

For additional resources, you can contact the Office for Equity and Diversity at www.academic.umn.edu/equity.

Ethnicity & Race
Race can influence students’ perspectives on their host country. Past participants of color tell us that the differences between their experiences and those of Euro-Americans can include both advantages and disadvantages. Students of color often learn a great deal about their identity as a US citizen through an experience in a foreign country, and they sometimes find the new cultural context quite liberating. On the other hand, they occasionally encounter new forms of prejudice and discrimination. It is important that participants of all races avoid projecting American assumptions and attitudes about race onto the host culture. For example, definitions of racial categories, if they exist at all, may be very different from those in the US.

It is difficult to generalize about the overt and covert levels of racism that may or may not exist in any given culture, or to predict what a particular student’s personal experience will be. It can be said that any experience abroad will be a combination of circumstances, attitude, and coping skills. Some study abroad offices have put together resources for students of color who are preparing to study abroad. You should contact your own study abroad office or a member of the Arabic Language & Culture in Morocco staff for additional information.

Students going to a location related to their ethnic heritage might wish to examine critically their expectations in advance. If part of your reason for enrolling in Arabic Language & Culture in Morocco is to explore your own identity, be careful not to romanticize what you might find. Students often discover that local people perceive them much more in terms of their American identity than their racial or ethnic background. You may gain rich insights into your roots, but be conscious of your expectations.

Students with Disabilities
Many of the disability accommodations or services that are provided at US universities may be different or unavailable overseas. Being in a new environment can also be stressful, and accommodations that you may not have needed at home may become necessary in an unfamiliar setting. Participants with any kind of disability, whether hidden or visible, should contact the Learning Abroad Center in advance to discuss their particular needs. The LAC will work closely with students and the Disability Resource Center to provide the necessary accommodations, as possible.

Arrival Logistics

Coordinated Flight
Participants will receive flight information and booking instructions from Village Travel in St. Paul, which handles flight arrangements for the Learning Abroad Center. Students from the Twin Cities area fly in a group; students from elsewhere join that group in either a US or a European hub. Visit Village Travel’s website at: www.villageinc.com. It is generally considerably more expensive to fly directly to Fez, so most often the designated flight will be to Rabat or Casablanca. Students who arrive on the group flight will be picked up and driven, as a group, to Fez. If you elect not to take the coordinated flight, you must arrive prior to the coordinated flight in order to travel with the program-arranged van to Fez.

Airport Guidelines
Customs forms must be completed upon arrival and prior to departure from Morocco. Carry-on luggage when departing Morocco is restricted to five kilos. Be prepared to check all your luggage and place valuables in your small carry-on bag.

Arrival
All students must arrive in Fez by the official arrival date listed on the Learning Abroad Center program website. Students who arrive late without prior approval may be dismissed from the program.

In-country staff will meet the group flight at the airport in Morocco and take you to a hotel. They will hold a sign with the Minnesota name, and you should remain at the airport as a group until you can identify the proper person. If you do not see a staff person when you arrive, stay in the airport and seek assistance from an official airline agent.

If for any reason you choose not to book your flights through Village Travel, you must provide the Learning Abroad Center with a copy of your itinerary by the following dates—August 15 for fall semester, December 15 for spring semester, May 1 for Summer Session I and the 9-Week Summer Intensive program, or June 1 for Summer Session II—so that we can notify the on-site staff of your itinerary.

If you are delayed or do not arrive in time to meet the group flight, you must make your own arrangements to arrive in Fez. Some students fly to Fez while others take the train from their arrival city.

The trip is long and it will take you across several time zones. You can reduce the effects of jet lag by avoiding alcohol during the flight and drinking lots of water or other beverages. A light nap upon arrival can help you through the first day, but a long sleep can delay your adjustment to the new time zone.
You may not be able to call home immediately upon your arrival. Telephones are not readily available, you will be exhausted, and orientation will begin quickly. Let your friends and family know that it may take several days for them to hear from you, and you are likely to contact them via email. The in-country staff will notify the Learning Abroad Center if a student does not arrive, and we will call the student’s emergency contact, as needed. Remind friends and family members not to contact the on-site staff directly. All contact should be through the Learning Abroad Center.

Orientation In Country

You will stay as a group in a hotel for the first 1–3 nights in Fez, depending on the term. These nights are included in the program fee. If you choose to arrive in Fez before the program’s official start date, you are responsible for arranging your own accommodations until the official arrival date. The first few days give you time to recover from the trip and to begin acquainting yourselves with each other before moving to your homestays. During this time you will receive an orientation to Morocco, the staff, and the faculty. You will also have some opportunities to begin acquainting yourselves with Fez. When it comes time to move to your homestay, your host family will come to ALIF to pick you up and take you to your new home.

Moroccan culture is much less schedule-driven than US culture. If you ever have any questions about when and where the next orientation activity is being held, don’t be afraid to ask Mr. Jai or Ms. Bouchard. Also, be prepared to deal with some ambiguity and uncertainty during orientation week. ALIF will be receiving many new students during the week, and the ALIF center will be buzzing with activity. If you have questions about when and where you should be, ask! Additionally, the Learning Abroad Center will email your UMN email address, 1–2 weeks prior to departure, with the on-site orientation schedule. Be sure to print this schedule and bring it with you to Morocco. Please note that the order of orientation events is subject to change, but that all pertinent information and orientation aspects will be covered.

Staying after the Program

If you intend to stay in Morocco after the program ends, you are responsible for your own housing and your transportation arrangement when you depart. You can inquire with the on-site staff whether you can store a small amount of luggage at ALIF, but this is not guaranteed. It is not acceptable to remain in your homestay after the program, unless the on-site staff authorizes it. In all cases, you must pay for any lodging after the program ends.

For students departing on the official group flight on the program end date, ALIF will arrange transportation if there are at least four students traveling together to depart for the group flight. In all other cases, you are responsible for your own arrangements to the group flight in Casablanca, Rabat, or Fez. ALIF will be able to assist making arrangements, but ultimately they are your responsibility.

It is wise to ensure that you have a printed copy of your return flight itinerary and your electronic ticket number to confirm that you have paid for your ticket. Royal Air Maroc and other non-US airlines might not be able to look up your reservation by your last name and will not allow you to board without a confirmed ticket or ticket verification.

Practical & Program Information

On-Site Support

Resident Director

The resident director for the Arabic Language & Culture program for the University of Minnesota is Abdellatif Jai. He will be your main contact throughout your stay in Fez. He is available for any questions or concerns you may have. Mr. Jai is assisted by a number of support staff including Linda Bouchard (registrar), Faisal (the housing coordinator), Abdellali (coordinator for the language buddy program and the service learning volunteer opportunities), and a reception staff. David Amster, the director of ALIF, is also available to assist you. You should take the initiative to contact them by cell phone or email whenever you have questions or need assistance. ALIF staff will likely not have regularly scheduled office hours posted, but they are always available to assist when asked.

Facilities

The ALIF office has a library, study space, a garden, snack bar, and wireless access, as well as classrooms on site where you will take their classes. Also familiarize yourself with the whiteboard near the ALIF center’s front door. The whiteboard includes information on upcoming events, activities, announcements and important messages. Check it frequently. Additionally, ALIF now also has an active Facebook page where events and activities are shared and continually updated.

There are Western-style toilets on the first and second floors and next to the courtyard.

ALIF offers a language buddy program and a volunteer service learning program. Contact Abdellali, the computer lab coordinator who organizes these opportunities, and take advantage of these options to practice your Arabic and meet local people and students. Additionally, ALIF hosts language lunches throughout each week with the focus language alternating between English, Fusha, and Darija.
ALIF also owns a riad in the medina for students living outside the Ville Nouvelle. The riad includes computer terminals, wireless internet access, kitchen facilities, a large-screen television, and a student lounge. ALIF organizes many cultural activities such as concerts and film showings at their riad. It is also a place to study in the evenings. Students have access to the riad on a set schedule during the week and weekends.

The on-site orientation includes activities designed to familiarize students with Fez. All students must pay a small, refundable library use deposit at ALIF.

Computers
ALIF has approximately 20 computers available for student use, although not all machines have internet access. You are encouraged to bring along a laptop to use for completing assignments, and the program office is wireless. Bring an adapter to plug in your computer and remember that laptops are easily stolen. Be mindful when storing your laptop and traveling with it. Never put these kinds of valuables in your checked luggage. ALIF typically closes during the lunch hours, so if you plan to use ALIF computers, check the schedule and plan accordingly.

Do not expect your homestay family to have internet access in their home. Some homestays will have access, and some will not. In addition to internet access at the ALIF center and the ALIF riad in the medina, Fez has a number of inexpensive coffee shops and internet cafes where you will be able to go online.

Accommodations
In order to integrate students as much as possible into daily Moroccan life and to provide the greatest level of safety, homestays in Fez are the standard housing placement. Fall, spring, and academic-year students have the option to find independent accommodations after the first three weeks of the program, but neither ALIF nor the Learning Abroad Center has oversight over independent housing. ALIF has a list of possible landlords, but ultimately it will be your responsibility to find your own housing. Students will be required to sign a housing release form if they leave the homestay option. For students leaving their homestays and taking private apartments, a portion of the housing fee will be refunded to use toward rent in Fez. Expect to pay more for an apartment than for staying in a homestay.

The in-country staff strives to match students with families that meet as many of the characteristics as possible that students have requested on their forms. However, it is often not possible to find a family that meets all the criteria a student has listed.

The Learning Abroad Center typically receives basic information about your homestay family (name and address) approximately one week prior to the program start date, and we will send the information to your University of Minnesota email account. However, last-minute changes occasionally occur, and some semesters we may not receive accurate homestay information until your arrival in Fez.

Since you may not know much about your host family prior to departure, we encourage you to bring a range of inexpensive, generic gifts (T-shirts, baseball caps, desk calendars, etc.) to give as gifts. Gifts specific to home institution or state are also appropriate.

The in-country staff will outline for you and the family your respective rights and responsibilities in the homestay. The family is told that for the most part your presence should not lead them to change their customs, operating rules, or food.

ALIF will not give your host family the exact dates of your program to give you the opportunity to confirm that the host family is a good match for you. You can share your program dates with the host family when you meet them and settle in. You will also need to tell them about any excursions dates when you will be away. ALIF does not share this information in case you choose to stay in Fez and would need housing.

You will need to bring a lightweight body towel with you and then purchase a good quality one at the modern shopping mall in Fez. You should also bring a small bar of soap until you can shop the many nice olive oil soaps available in Fez. It is not considered hygienic to share towels or soap in Morocco. For a long shower, ask your host family about the public hammams (steam baths), which are the appropriate place to get thoroughly cleaned and refreshed.

Tips for a Successful Homestay
The in-country staff seek families eager to incorporate US students into their lives. Host families are generally warm and welcoming and will want their students to participate in social events with friends and extended family. When you are placed with a family, you will probably get more than the family itself. You will get a wide range of friends, not to mention information, coaching, advice, and endless opportunities to practice your language skills. If you and the family are both willing to throw yourselves into making the experience a rich one, you are likely to look back on your homestay as a highlight of your time in Morocco.

A successful homestay requires consideration and cultural sensitivity. At times your cross-cultural skills and insights will be stretched. The in-country staff will supplement this with initial support and ongoing coaching to create a smooth linkage between students and their families. Staff are always available to assist and sort out cultural adjustment problems as they arise. Ask staff and faculty questions to help process your experience.

You will find your homestay parents and siblings very concerned for your well-being. They will be good sources of information and advice about negotiating the transportation system, safety precautions, etc. At the same time, their concern might occasionally seem to border on over-protectiveness,
especially if you are a woman. Understand that the family is not trying to control you but to fulfill its inescapable responsibilities for the welfare of its US daughter or son.

In most cases, your family will do your laundry. But Moroccan families do not typically do laundry every week. It may be two to three weeks between laundry cycles, so plan accordingly. For some homestay placements, it may be appropriate to wash your own undergarments by hand. This could be a case-by-case situation, since some host families will do all laundry and some may find it inappropriate to wash your undergarments. Take note early on to navigate this situation and connect with Faisal, the housing coordinator, if you have questions or concerns. It is also culturally polite to purchase some laundry detergent for your family at some point during your stay to recognize the additional work and utility use involved in doing your laundry.

When you leave the house, it is important to let your host family know where you expect to be, what time you plan to return home, and whether or not you will miss any meals. This also includes weekend travel outside of Fez. Never stay overnight elsewhere without notifying your family.

In Morocco, lunch tends to be the biggest meal of the day and is typically served at noon or shortly after. Breakfast is light. Dinner is also light and is often served very late (10 or 11 p.m.). You will eventually acclimate to this schedule, but it may be difficult to adjust to at first. Be sure to eat enough during the day to keep your energy up and stay alert.

In case of minor illnesses, your family will help you seek medical attention. In case of more serious problems, you and your family are expected to notify the ALIF and LAC staff immediately in order to coordinate the best possible treatment.

Most families are conservative about relations between men and women. You are not allowed to have overnight guests of the opposite sex or to receive visitors in a closed bedroom.

Be judicious in your use of alcohol. Your host family and Moroccan friends will disapprove of substance abuse, and drunkenness could irreparably damage your relations with people who are important to you. If your behavior is deemed disruptive, you may be expelled from the program.

It is important not to abuse hospitality. Remember to ask the family for permission to bring friends over, and be ready to cover extra expenses when inviting them.

Keep your room tidy and be respectful of the common spaces in the house. Since you are a guest in the home, your bedroom should be kept in a manner that shows your respect and appreciation. In Morocco, the notion of personal and private space does not exist in the same manner as in the US, and your room in your host family is not the same as having your own room in the US. Do not leave your clothes strewn on the floor or leave personal belongings around the house. Do not put your shoes on furniture, including your own bed. However, Moroccans often wear slippers, or “house shoes,” and you will likely be expected to do the same.

Keep in mind that US students tend to use more toilet paper than Moroccans. Purchase toilet paper at some point during your stay to give the host family to recognize this difference. Host families receive a modest stipend to host you in their home, and this additional gesture is important.

If you have questions about your homestay experience, speak to the on-site staff. As in the US, it is not acceptable for you to be asked, for example, to assist with caring for a host family member on a daily basis, be exposed to drunken or rude behavior, or tolerate any sexual advances. Although it is extremely rare for a host family experience to involve any of these, speak to the on-site staff immediately if you have any concerns.

Students should speak to the staff promptly regarding any questions or concerns so that these can be addressed. Morocco is a different culture from the US, and it is important that students discuss their questions and concerns promptly so that the on-site staff can address any situations promptly. The Learning Abroad Center and ALIF strive to facilitate positive homestay experiences for all students.

Excursions & Break Periods

These include a day trip to Volubilis and Meknes and a weekend trip to the desert. Keep in mind that the desert trip hotel has an indoor/outdoor swimming pool, so you should pack a swimsuit. You will also need mosquito spray and a fleece jacket for the evenings.

A break period is provided between the two six-week language terms. The length will vary from a few days to one week, depending on the schedule for that term. Refer to the Learning Abroad Center program website for details on the break for your term in Morocco.

Academic-year students also have a break after fall and winter terms and can elect to stay in their housing over the break periods. This cost is included in the total program fee.

Money Matters

Money & Its Exchange

Morocco’s official currency is the Dirham, which is broken down into 100 Centimes. Most Moroccans, however, tend to use a system of francs (Centimes) and riyals (5 Centimes) among themselves, and prices more often than not will be given in one of these denominations. High-denomination notes (100Dh and 200Dh) can be difficult, if not impossible, to break with street vendors, unless you are making a very large purchase. You may need to break these larger bills at a bank.

Visit [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) for current exchange rates.
It is a good idea to bring approximately $200 in cash with you. You can exchange money for a nominal fee at a local bank (not all banks handle foreign currency), an exchange office, or the airport. When exchanging US currency, the exchange rate will be less favorable if you are exchanging bills that are $20 or less. Traveler's checks can be useful for emergencies, but they generally do not yield a favorable exchange rate and must be cashed at a bank or foreign currency office. Carry all cash, traveler's checks, and credit cards in your money belt except what you might need during the day.

**Wiring Money**

Wiring money can be costly, and the money can get lost. US checks or bank drafts sent from home require an additional fee to cash and may not arrive in time. Money orders, cashier's checks, and certified checks are extremely difficult to cash in Morocco.

**ATM, Debit, and Credit Cards**

For students choosing to use ATM or debit cards, ATMs are easy to locate and to use in urban areas. Be sure to check with your US-based bank regarding charges for international transaction and ATM withdraw fees so you are informed about the foreign exchange fees you will encounter. Check with your bank if there are specific ATMs that have lower fees than others.

We suggest that you carry a major credit card in your name, which you can use to charge items in department stores and restaurants. It is also the best way to receive cash at ATMs. American Express, Visa, and MasterCard are all options; past participants seem to have had the most success with Visa cards. You will need to know your PIN to receive cash from the ATM, and you will need to have your passport to receive cash advances from the local bank.

When using a credit card, remember that interest is charged and that the purchase price is converted to dollars based on the exchange rate the day the purchase is posted on your account in the US, not the day you make the purchase. Make arrangements for someone to pay your bill in the US while you are overseas. Small shops and traditional markets generally do not accept debit or credit cards and sometimes do not have change for larger bills. You might find success using cards when purchasing goods at vendors often frequented by tourists.

Alert your bank and credit card companies that you will be in Fez, Morocco, as well as the dates of your program. If you travel outside of Morocco during the program, update your bank and credit card companies on your travel so your cards are not shut off if used in an unexpected location. You are encouraged to track your accounts to be aware of foreign transaction fees, as well as to be sure all transactions are ones you have completed.

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**Communication**

**Mail**

Mail should be sent to the student address at the ALIF/ALC office on the cover of this Guide.

Mail takes about two weeks to reach Morocco from the US. It is advisable to send everything first class airmail. While a bit more expensive, FedEx, DHL, or another courier service is the most reliable and efficient way of sending/receiving mail in Morocco. Any valuable items should be registered; obtain a receipt and airway bill number, which can assist in tracing packages should they get lost. Do not attempt to send a parcel or letter by surface mail; it would take at least three months. Mail whose contents are liable to customs duty (tax) will have to be received in Fez where duty is normally collected. An advice slip is posted to the recipient to come to Fez to declare the item to be duty paid. Make sure friends and family indicate on the parcels, “Contents are of no commercial value.” This may help the authorities decide whether or not to charge duty on parcels.

**Telephone**

Even if your Moroccan home has a telephone, you will not be allowed to make international calls. You may be able to receive calls. There are many bureaus from where you can make international calls at reasonable cost. You may wish to arrange a monthly time for your family to call once you have settled in and have a schedule and specific location. Generally you should share your homestay phone number with your parents only. Most homestay parents do not like excessive use of their private home phones (which are usually in their bedrooms), whether to receive or call out. Moreover, even for local calls there is a toll, so use the phone sparingly.

All Learning Abroad Center programs require all students to purchase a cell phone. This not only is a good safety precaution but greatly facilitates communication between students and staff. ALIF staff will take you into the Ville Nouvelle where you can shop for phones during orientation. Phones cost approximately $50, depending on the model you select.

The on-site staff will all have personal phones and email accounts. It is typical and expected that you will contact them by phone or email whenever you have program questions or need assistance.

**Email & Web**

Internet bureaus are available in a number of Moroccan cities. The ALIF office has computers for students to use. The office also has wireless access for use on laptops. There is a small charge for any printing you do at the ALIF computer lab. Using computer applications (Skype, Google hangout, etc.) during free time via Wi-Fi at ALIF or at the ALIF Riad are alternative ways to communicate with friends and family back home.
Work Abroad & Work Permits

Students on study abroad programs should give careful consideration to the practicality of working while participating in the program. In most countries it is not possible to work when entering with a student visa.

Full-time students who plan to stay beyond the end of their program may be able to obtain a work permit through a variety of work permit programs, depending on the country. Students often find this a useful way to complement their study program and extend their stay. Students going abroad with the specific goal of working should work with a permit program or obtain all necessary documentation before departing for their destination. Information on work opportunities can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.

FERPA

It is important to be aware that the Learning Abroad Center and the Office of Student Finance, in compliance with the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and Regents policy, cannot share financial information with a third party (including parents, spouse, guardians, etc.) without your written permission. You can download a Student Information Release Authorization at onestop.umn.edu. Complete the form and send it to OneStop Student Services, 200 Fraser Hall, 106 Pleasant St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455. The Learning Abroad Center must receive a copy of a notarized Power of Attorney form in order to share any program-specific information.

Academics

See the Learning Abroad Center's website for academic policies: UMaabroad.umn.edu/students/policies.

Program Enrollment Options

You will take a language placement test upon arrival to determine which of ALIF’s levels is most appropriate for you. There is some flexibility to move up or down a level during the first few days of class, but because of the short-term and intensive nature of courses, students are typically locked into their language level after the first week of class. If you feel you were placed in a level too high or too low for your abilities, speak to your instructor immediately.

All students on summer, semester, or academic-year programs are required to take the Moroccan Society and Culture course, which combines cultural learning from the language courses with walking tours, discussions, and guest lectures. Weekly class meetings, short reflective papers, and short oral presentations help students reflect on and understand their experiences in Morocco. All students are required to take this course for at least one credit. The course is only one credit in the summer. For the semester and academic year, students can choose to take this course for three credits, which includes a substantive research project. Students can change from one to three credits or from three credits to one within the first two weeks of the semester. However, students must consult with Mr. Jai in advance before making these changes, and UofM students can then adjust their own credit load online. After the second week the number of credits cannot be changed.

A three-credit research project, with the heavy ALIF course load, will be a challenge and likely best suited for those who are confident in their language skills and have a clear sense of a potential research topic. University of Minnesota–Twin Cities students completing a research project are eligible to apply for the I-UROP scholarship: UMaabroad.umn.edu/students/finances/scholarships/irop-scholarship.

UMTC students are able to have one hour per week of tutorials if placed in a lower course than anticipated when originally registered.

All language courses at ALIF are intensive in nature. Expect class four hours per day, five days per week (20 hours per week). Language classes typically run in two-hour blocks, one in the morning (8–10 a.m. or 10 a.m.–12 p.m.) and one in the afternoon (2–4 p.m. or 4–6 p.m.), with a break in between for lunch. Class sizes may range anywhere from two to ten students per class, depending on the level and demand.

Topics courses meet less often (usually once or two per week) and are scheduled around your language courses.

Summer Programs

There are two summer options for students. Two 6-week Summer Session options and a 9-Week Intensive program.

Students participating on a six-week session register for one Arabic language course for six credits and the required Moroccan Society and Culture course for one credit. The language course can be Modern Standard Arabic or Colloquial Moroccan Arabic. Students register for a total of seven credits. Students cannot register for both 6-week sessions because the program timelines overlap.

Students participating on the 9-Week Intensive summer program register for one track for a total of 11 credits. Each track includes two Modern Standard Arabic language courses (ten credits total) and the required Moroccan Society and Culture course for one credit. The track combines a full language course (from the descriptions on the program web page) with the first half of the next course sequence.

Advanced students beyond six semesters of Arabic will register for one language course for six credits and a three-credit topics course or a three-credit Colloquial Moroccan Arabic course, as well as the required Moroccan Society and Culture (one credit) for a total of ten credits.
Academic-Year Program

All students on an academic year program will register for two Arabic language courses for fall and for spring semester (six credits per course). Students can choose from Modern Standard Arabic, Colloquial Moroccan Arabic, and special Arabic-taught topics course, if at advanced level (five credits). Students will take the required Moroccan Society and Culture course during fall semester. Additionally, students will register for one of the English-taught electives per semester and will take one Arabic language course during the semester break. Students can choose to take a three-credit internship or research course during spring semester. University of Minnesota–Twin Cities students interested in doing research may be eligible for an International Undergraduate Research Program (I-UROP) Scholarship: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/finances/scholarships/urop-scholarship. Total registration will equal 14–19 credits per semester, depending on language level. See course descriptions on the website.

Students doing an academic-year program can enhance their winter break language course by participating in a service learning activity offered by ALIF.

Semester Program

Courses Offered

All students register for a total of 15–19 semester credits. Complete course descriptions are included on the website.

All students register for two Arabic language classes and two additional topics courses. One of the topics courses is the Moroccan Society & Culture course for one or three credits. Advanced Arabic students have the option to take a topics course in Arabic instead of a second language course, depending on their course schedule and level.

Topics Courses

In addition to Moroccan Society and Culture, semester and Academic Year students will choose between Gender, Modernization, and Social Change in Morocco and Islam: Past and Present, as their other topics course.

Gender, Modernization, and Social Change in Morocco explores interrelationships between gender, modernization, and social change in postcolonial Morocco with emphasis on social institutions, religion, development, traditions, and contemporary issues.

Islam: Past and Present examines Islam and its influence in Morocco. Students will study Islam’s historical roots and contemporary manifestations through a discussion of historical works, literature, and film. The course will provide a perspective on the different ways Islam is realized in Moroccan life including religion, customs, and politics. It will also address the Moroccan perception of Islam and its representation in the West.

See the Full Course List webpage for additional information on the English-taught and Arabic-taught topics courses, including full syllabi: UMabroad.umn.edu/programs/africa/morocco/academics/courses.

Registration

Non-University of Minnesota students will be registered by the Learning Abroad Center.

All University of Minnesota students will be responsible for registering themselves for the Arabic Language & Culture program in Morocco. You will be given all the necessary information for registration by the Learning Abroad Center. Do not look for your class number to appear on the University of Minnesota’s online class list. The numbers you need for registration can only be obtained from the Learning Abroad Center. If you register for a course that is listed on OneStop, you have registered for the wrong course and may be subject to regular University of Minnesota tuition charges. Register yourself after your designated registration queue time. Failure to complete registration on time may result in late registration fees and may delay or prevent financial aid disbursement. Contact helpingu@umn.edu or www.onestop.umn.edu with questions about financial aid.

If you do not register for study abroad, your grades cannot be processed. Failure to register before departing for study abroad may result in no credit for your study abroad program. University of Minnesota students should receive credit for your next level of language coursework, using the Learning Abroad Center course numbers, regardless of your placement at ALIF. However, you must schedule a brief oral assessment meeting with the Arabic Director of Language Instruction to confirm this and for registration in the next course in your sequence. If you place lower than expected, the Learning Abroad Center includes a free tutorial one hour a week to ensure that you can make the progress necessary for your continued coursework in the US upon your return.

Before Registration (UMN Students Only)

- Meet with your academic adviser(s) and complete the Academic Planning for Study Abroad Form.
- Check online for holds or required registration approvals that would prevent you from registering for classes and clear them before the registration date. The Learning Abroad Center can not remove holds on student accounts.

Drop/Add

Students will have two weeks from the beginning of the program to drop/add classes. You must speak with Mr. Jai prior to dropping or adding a class. See the Learning Abroad Center academic policies online for further information.
Books & Materials
All books and materials will be bought or rented on site. Paper items are a bit more expensive in Morocco so you may want to bring notebooks or folders. The estimated fee for books is $100.

Language of Instruction
All language courses in Morocco will be taught in Modern Standard Arabic, unless noted that the course is Colloquial Moroccan. Topics courses will be taught in English except for advanced Arabic topics courses offered by ALIF.

Grades & Credit
All courses must be taken for A/F credit. The Learning Abroad Center does not permit S/N (pass/fail) registration. The University of Minnesota’s A/F grading scale includes grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, and F.

All coursework is posted on a University of Minnesota transcript approximately eight weeks after the end of the program. For non-University of Minnesota students, the Learning Abroad Center sends a transcript of work completed on the Arabic Language & Culture program in Morocco to the student’s home institution. Ensure that this address is the correct one. Non-University of Minnesota students can order additional copies for a charge directly from the University of Minnesota’s transcript office at: www.onestop.umn.edu/onestop/grades.html.

Incompletes
This program does not grant incompletes. Rare exceptions can be requested in cases such as serious health problems or family emergencies. These exceptions must be approved in advance by the on-site director.

Grade Petitions
If you wish to question a grade issued for a particular course after the program is completed, you must provide evidence that the professor made an error in his/her grade calculation. The following are not reasonable grounds for grade appeal:

- Differences between US and host country educational systems
- Personal disappointment in grade outcome
- Comparison with one’s own prior academic record/GPA
- Failure to complete one or more assignments
- Minimum grade requirement of college/department or home university (in the case of non-University of Minnesota participants)
- Health concerns/missed classes

Contact the Learning Abroad Center for a grad petition form if you believe an error has occurred.

Student Grievances
Academic grievances are complaints brought by students regarding the provision of education and academic support services affecting their role as students. For grievances concerning University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center programs or affiliated programs offered through the Learning Abroad Center, students should make inquiries and appeals to the appropriate program representative in the Learning Abroad Center.

Life in Morocco

Introduction to Morocco
The following information is also provided in ALIF’s student handbook that you will receive upon arrival. In addition to general information about Morocco, it contains helpful travel tips and other valuable guidelines.

Morocco is one of the most functionally modern and open countries of the Arab world and, at the same time, one of the most traditional. Fez is a city where one can enjoy the best of both worlds. City-dwelling Moroccans, led by His Majesty King Mohamed VI, move from ultra-modern to ancient modes of doing things with the same ease and dignity that they shift from French to Arabic. It is a country of pronounced tolerance where foreigners are normally held in high esteem and made to feel welcome. Though rural people’s hospitality is often as spontaneous as it is genuine, urbanized Moroccans typically don’t open their doors readily to foreigners without some sort of preliminary introduction or after repeated contact that gives them time to size you up. Generally, doors to Moroccan contacts are not opened through casual encounters in public places. The people of Morocco have a distinct and age-old cultural-religious heritage of which they are justifiably proud. They cherish deep-rooted values and norms that may not coincide with your own. It therefore behooves students to be adequately informed about Moroccan culture and, while you are not expected to agree with all of its attitudes and conventions, you will do well to either express appreciation or to at least reserve judgment and negative comment.

In fact, the Moroccan who approaches you in a friendly way in the street is more often than not some sort of hustler who wishes to sell something or make a commission on you from someone else who has something to sell. Thus, many young enterprising Moroccans have turned to being unofficial guides or hustlers in order to earn money, and they continue to do so despite the government’s recent campaign against these activities.

The Linguistic Situation in Morocco
For those students who have never lived or studied in an Arab country before, a word of explanation is in order. While both Modern Standard Arabic (MSA/Fusha) and Colloquial
Moroccan Arabic (CMA/Darija) are largely derived from the same basic source (so-called “Classical Arabic”), they are in many ways two distinct languages. MSA is the language of the news media, written correspondence, official documents, literature, and formal speeches. As strange as it might sound, MSA is not a language spoken fluently by the majority of Moroccans (or Arabs, for that matter). Though few educated Moroccans have difficulty reading Arabic and understanding Arabic news broadcasts, few of them feel truly confident in using it as a means of oral communication. To further complicate matters for students wishing to practice their MSA outside of class, many Moroccan professionals have been educated in France so that in discussing more intellectual or technical topics they may have difficulty expressing themselves without turning to French. It is not uncommon for a foreign student trying to make conversation with a Moroccan in MSA to be answered in French. Obviously, if you don’t know French, the Moroccan in question will be forced to express himself or herself in as correct a variety of MSA as he/she can handle. It bears pointing out that for most Moroccans, MSA spoken in day-to-day situations has an almost comical quality about it, comparable perhaps to the effect of speaking Shakespearean English with a regular person on the street. However, it is important for students to learn to communicate in the larger Arabic-speaking world by learning MSA.

Islam

Though Morocco is, legally speaking, a secular state, Islam remains the official state religion and 98% of Moroccans are at least nominally Muslim of the prevalent Sunni school (rather than the Shi’a as in Iran). It is indicative that among the titles of His Majesty King Mohamed VI of Morocco is “Prince of Believers” (Amir al-Mu’minîn), an ancient title used by the early Caliphs of Islam. While “Islamic fundamentalist” political movements have not gained a widespread foothold in Morocco, violence has occurred, and you should keep informed of daily news and political events.

Keep in mind that proselytizing is illegal in Morocco, and you must be careful about your conversations. Although Moroccans have different degrees of adherence to Islamic religion, nearly everyone is religious and it is best to be evasive about your religious or non-religious beliefs.

Visiting Muslim Places of Worship: In Morocco, non-Muslims are not allowed to enter mosques, mausoleums, or other religious shrines. This interdiction does not include the theological colleges (medersas), which are among Morocco’s most splendid historic monuments. However, Moroccans are fairly tolerant of non-Muslims peeking respectfully into mosques from the doorway.

Ramadan: During the month of Ramadan, the vast majority of Moroccans fast (from early dawn to sunset) and those who don’t are very circumspect about eating, drinking, or smoking. Cafés remain closed all day and open about an hour and a half after sunset. As for restaurants, most close down for the month with the exception of a few located in hotels. Students residing with Moroccan host families are not expected to fast and some provision will be made for their breakfasts and lunches; however, the main meal will be in the evening. Just as host families are asked to be understanding that students may or may not observe Ramadan, it is expected that students respect the fasting their host family will observe during Ramadan.

It is highly advised that you eat the food provided by your host family during Ramadan, as well as eat extra food at ALIF if needed, to tide you over until the main evening meal. If your host family is not providing a premade lunch for you to bring to ALIF (because they will likely not be eating lunch at home during Ramadan), please let the ALIF and LAC staff know. Navigating needs and expectations during Ramadan can be sensitive, and the ALIF staff is very skilled at being sensitive to all involved. Please also consult with the Learning Abroad staff.

Dress: The strictest Islamic prescriptions require that a Muslim woman be completely covered except for her hands and face and that a Muslim man be covered from his navel to his knees. However, there are many pious women throughout the Muslim world who adopt this form of dress for prayer but wear Western-style clothing for work or leisure. There are many variations in the personal interpretation of what is “proper” clothing for a woman. Here, too, most city-dwelling Moroccans are fairly tolerant in their attitudes and do not expect foreigners to adhere to local dress codes, which often vary dramatically from person to person anyway. However, this does not mean that anything goes. Few Moroccan men wear shorts apart from sporting activities which require them, nor do they go bare-chested except at the beach. Foreigners who do this are usually tolerated but stick out like sore thumbs. Female students are encouraged to dress in a way that balances their need for comfort with a basic minimum of modesty to avoid attracting attention to themselves as objects of sexual desire. This does not mean you are expected to wear headscarves or long dresses, but you should avoid mini-skirts, tight pants, shorts, and low-cut tops. Modest tank tops can be worn with a light scarf to cover the shoulders. Young Moroccan women do wear nice, tight-fitting jeans, but foreigners will draw attention to themselves in this kind of attire.

Alcohol: Drinking alcohol is expressly forbidden in Islam and its negative social connotations derive largely from this interdiction. While Fez does have several bars, hotels, and restaurants that serve liquor, most Moroccans do not drink. Those that do are often not the best elements of Moroccan society. Therefore, students—especially women—are cautioned about social drinking with Moroccans, since this can sometimes lead to unpleasant and, occasionally, even dangerous situations. If you drink, it is recommended that you do so in hotel lounges or restaurants rather than in bars, which tend to be quite seedy in Morocco.
Women in Morocco

The place women are accorded in Moroccan society has seen significant transformation in recent years. By way of example, two women were recently elected to the Moroccan Parliament (one of whom is from Fez), and classes at Morocco’s universities are attended by men and women in nearly equal numbers. More and more women are joining the work force in professions that were once the exclusive domain of men. Nevertheless, traditional attitudes among both men and women concerning the role of the latter are still much in force and differ considerably from those in other societies and, viewed from a Western perspective, the constraints placed upon women often seem extreme. For example, certain public places, such as bars and some cafés, are considered inappropriate for women, and unmarried women (even if they are over 21) may have strict parental restrictions on when they can leave the house.

The culture differences in Morocco can be more challenging in certain respects, and potentially more challenging for women. An open-mindedness is crucial for getting the most out of Morocco; however, resilience can help in challenging circumstances as well. Women’s status in Morocco’s social sphere is much different than is often experienced in the United States, and there will be a different level or hassle on the streets, but understanding the cultural differences can help.

The greatest problems most female students will encounter are catcalls from men on the streets, generally consisting of little more than “bonjour” or “hello.” This treatment is not reserved for foreigners. Moroccan women receive similar advances, and are generally aware that, while extremely annoying, such advances are seldom physically threatening. A response is not expected. Don’t worry about being “rude” since it is not impolite to ignore a stranger’s greetings or questions in the street; to respond—even in a negative way—is to offer them reason to continue bothering you. It goes without saying that invitations from unknown men to “meet their families” should be flatly refused. If anyone becomes particularly persistent, rude, or difficult to avoid, call him to someone else’s attention. Other Moroccans—both men and women—are often more than willing to intervene when they see someone in need of help and won’t hesitate to chastise someone whom they see behaving shamefully. If you are ever followed more than once by the same man, contact the on-site staff rather than trying to deal with him on your own.

By far the best way to ensure one’s safety in Morocco is by avoiding deserted places and sticking to areas where there are plenty of people around to help should you have any difficulties. Women in Morocco, more often than not, go out of the house in pairs or groups, and you will rarely find a woman on the streets by herself after dark. While this is by no means necessary for foreign students, having a Moroccan companion to show you around the city, at least initially, will go a long way toward making your stay in Fez an enjoyable experience.

You will see women in Fez dress ranging from very modern and Western to very traditional and conservative. However, as mentioned earlier in the section on Islam, dressing modestly is an important factor for mitigating unpleasant situations. Avoiding deserted places, walking purposefully, and realizing that it is inappropriate to talk to unknown men in the street—no matter how persistent they may be—will spare you a lot of headaches.

Women should never attempt to go to bars unaccompanied. This is partially true for cafés, too, which tend to be male-only gathering places. However, the more elegant pastry-shop or juice-shop cafes are usually acceptable places for women, especially sitting inside or upstairs with a companion. Naturally, foreign women have a certain leeway that “respectable” Moroccan women do not share. However, even this cultural license has its limitations and its price. Smoking in public by women is still considered somewhat risqué.

Male-Female Relationships

Relations between men and women in Morocco differ considerably from those in the US. Students should try to be sensitive to these differences, since misunderstandings can lead to hurt feelings, resentment, and, occasionally, physically threatening situations. Strong, non-romantic friendships between members of the opposite sex are far less common in Morocco than in the US, and these are generally formed and maintained within the structure of family gatherings, work, or school. The occasional couples you will see walking together or in cafés are most often married or dating—a practice which is still not as common or open in Fez as in other major Moroccan cities. This is not to say that male-female friendships do not exist, however, because many students have developed many lifelong friendships in the ALIF garden and through their families.

Should you be interested in something more intimate than a platonic friendship, whether you’re male or female, make sure you know what you’re getting into. Outside of schoolyard flirtations, much of the dating that does go on in Fez occurs with marriage as the eventual aim. Some couples, in fact, are not allowed to date until after their engagement. If you have no intention of getting married, it’s wise to make sure that the other interested party (and his or her family) shares your feelings.

Climate

In general, Fez is quite hot and dry in the summer and cold and damp in the winter, with nights dipping to 30° Fahrenheit (January–April). This cold has a particular chilling bite indoors because most of the buildings are made of concrete, tile, and marble and lack any insulation or heating to speak of. Layer your clothes to be prepared for the intense midday sun, which creates extreme changes in temperature from day to evening.

Most evenings will be cool and will require a light jacket.
Shopping
Bartering is a regular practice in Morocco. If you do not feel comfortable bartering, you may find haggle-free shopping at the modern shopping mall located near the ALIF center. Prices listed, especially in open markets, are often inflated. For most purchases you can barter down to one-half, one-quarter, or even less of the initial price given.

Be wary of vendors who make you uneasy. Merchants may make unwanted advances toward women. Never follow anyone into a back room, even if they say they have something you are looking for. Travel in a group from vendor to vendor, and make sure no one becomes separated from the group.

Coming Home
By the time you return home from Morocco, you will have grown and changed significantly. You will probably find yourself experiencing reverse culture shock. Many students find that returning home is harder than leaving was. It is very normal to experience these feelings and you aren’t alone. You are encouraged to tap into the resources available in order to make the transition home easier. To stay connected to your study abroad experience, you may want to:

- Talk with other study abroad participants
- Become a classroom visit intern
- Assist with future Morocco orientations
- Become a Global Ambassador through the Learning Abroad Center
- Attend Market Your International Experience workshops

Stop by the Learning Abroad Center any time. We enjoy talking to students who have returned from study abroad.

Finally, remember to visit the Returned Students section of our website at [UMabroad.umn.edu/students/process/reentry](UMabroad.umn.edu/students/process/reentry).

Tips from Past Participants
The following tips may be helpful to you as you prepare for your experience:

- “Pack very light. I was fine living on 2 pairs of pants, 3 polo shirts, 3 undershirts, a pair of shorts, socks and underwear, and some warm clothing.”
- “Women shouldn’t have trouble as long as they dress modestly and don’t respond angrily to male attention.”
- “Go! Go to Morocco, try to learn Arabic, and just see how different everything is, because it is so amazingly different and important to know and see how that works.”
- “ALIF has a library with a ton of English and Arabic books and tons of DVDs to rent, so students don’t need to bring books like I did.”
- “I found my host family enjoyed my staying there because I went in and tried to do things Moroccan. I greeted Moroccan, spoke Arabic, and ate the food in front of me doing my best to act like someone would who had lived there their whole life.”
- “Keep in mind that Morocco gets cold in the winter, and the houses are not heated.”
- “I definitely learned a lot of Arabic outside the classroom. It’s hard not to; you are immersed in the language every second of the day.”
Cultural Adjustment

The On-Site Experience

What happens when you suddenly lose clues and symbols that orient you to situations in everyday life? What happens when facial expressions, gestures, and words are unfamiliar? The psychological discomfort and adjustment period in a foreign country is commonly known as culture shock or cultural adjustment.

You will almost certainly experience some form of culture shock. It might hit you after two days, two weeks, or two months—timing varies widely for different people. Six common phases of cultural adjustment are listed below. These may be out of order for you, one phase may last longer than another, or you may skip a step entirely.

**Initial Fascination:** On arrival your surroundings seem glamorous and exotic, you feel like the focus of attention and activity.

**Initial Culture Shock:** The initial fascination and euphoria fade as you settle in and you enter an emotional decline.

**Surface Adjustment:** After the initial “down” (a few days to a few weeks for most), you begin to truly adjust and settle into your surroundings. Language skills begin to improve, and you’ll feel less fatigued. Often you’ll be forming a small group of friends at this stage as well.

**Feelings of Isolation:** Difficulties in your new culture seem to stubbornly remain and you grow frustrated with the process. A sense of isolation sets in. Boredom and a lack of motivation often follow. Unresolved personal issues often surface during this stage.

**Integration/Acceptance:** After continued effort you find yourself more at ease with language, friends, professional, and academic interests. The culture you are living in is more easily examined. Differences between yourself and the society you live in become understandable and you come to accept both the situation and yourself in it, allowing you to relax and feel at home.

**Return Anxiety:** Just when you feel at home in the new country it’s time to go. Thoughts of leaving new friends raise anxiety similar to those felt before departure. You sense that you’ve changed as a person and apprehension grows when you think about people at home that may not understand your new feelings and insights, yet you may feel guilty for wanting to stay.

When in any of the above phases you may experience: changes in sleeping habits, feelings of helplessness or hopelessness, loneliness, depression, unexplainable crying, placing blame for difficulties on the program or host culture, homesickness, getting angry easily, increase in physical ailments or pain, compulsive eating, or lack of appetite.

Other symptoms may manifest themselves as well. It is important to understand these are part of a normal process of adjustment, however, if uncomfortable feelings persist for extended periods or seem unbearable, seek assistance from your program’s on-site support staff.

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**Cultural Adjustment Curve**

Adjusted from Oberg (1960) and Gallahorn (1963)
Appendix

Since you will be carrying your own luggage during the trip, often for long stretches in airports, bus, and train stations, it is important that you pack sensibly. Take only as much as you can carry easily by yourself. One way to measure what is easily carried is to pack everything you would like to take, pick it all up, and walk around the block. If you are not comfortable doing so, you may want to reevaluate what you’ve packed.

**Important:** Take clothing that needs a minimal amount of care (this is especially important if you plan to do any independent traveling). You may have to go a couple of weeks without fresh laundry, especially at the beginning of the program.

Many travelers find that the most practical solution is to wash all underwear by hand and to take only such outer clothing as can be worn many times without showing soil.

Keep in mind that you cannot ship materials to the program in advance. Any items you wish to mail should be sent by friends or family members after your arrival.

**Suggested Packing List**

(These are only suggestions; you should adjust accordingly to your own personal tastes and style. This list is typical for a four-month stay).

- Underwear (lots of underwear, durable bras)
- Socks (winter months)
- 4 shirts
- 2 lightweight sweaters
- Tank tops with modest neckline
- 2 pair jeans or pants
- Scarf (accessory)
- 1 nice outfit
- 1 pair pajamas (lightweight)
- Comfortable walking shoes
- 1 pair dress shoes
- 1 pair flip-flops for showers
- 1 swimsuit plus beach towel
- Jacket for cool weather (lightweight)
- Wool scarf and hat (winter months)
- 2 pairs of shorts (men only) or 2 skirts (to the knees)
- Yoga pants (for lounging at the homestay)
- Leggings (for under skirts)
- Long underwear (winter months)
- Wool sweater (winter months)
- Fleece pajamas (winter months)
- Slippers (winter months)
- Gloves (winter months)
- Packable lightweight down jacket (winter months)
- Sunglasses and sun hat
- Accessories

**Other necessary items may include:**

- Toothpaste and toothbrush
- Comb/brush
- Dental floss
- Shaving kit
- Deodorant
- Feminine hygiene products
- Washcloth and lightweight body towel
- Temporary supply of soap and shampoo (in unbreakable containers)
- Aspirin or other pain killer
- Supply of prescription medicine
- Extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses
- Sewing kit
- Safety pins
- Umbrella
- Arabic phrase book
- Arabic-English dictionary
- Grammar review book for easy reference
- Waterproof container/folder for storing documents
- Small lock to secure belongings in suitcase while abroad
- Camera with charger and/or replacement batteries (and all necessary equipment)
- Electrical adapters and converter
- Travel alarm clock (battery operated)
- Small gift for host family
- Water bottle
- Insect repellent (at least 21% DEET)
- Vitamins
- Sanitary wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Eye drops, contact lens-cleaning supplies
- Ear plugs
- Flashlight
- Sunscreen
- First-aid kit
- Thermometer (to detect fever)

Most of the above personal items can be found in Morocco; however, you may want to bring enough of your favorite brands to last you during your stay.

**Don’t forget to also bring along the following:**
- A supply of any prescription medication you take, sufficient for the duration of your time abroad. Contact CISI for help if you are unable to obtain a sufficient supply in advance.
- A copy of your insurance policy number and medical information concerning allergies, medications, blood type, immunization history, eyeglasses, or other prescriptions
- CISI card and brochure
- Photocopy of your passport and visa (scan your passport and email a copy to yourself)
- Photocopy of front and back of any credit/ATM cards you bring with you
- Handouts from the online orientations
- This Morocco program handbook
- Important phone numbers and email addresses of advisers at your home university
- Printout of the Embassy of Morocco’s visa page for use at airport, if asked
- Printout of the on-site orientation schedule you received via email prior to departure