

Module 7: Bon Appétit

Topic 3 Content: Le Maghreb

Introduction



Le Maghreb

Explore information about the region in Northwest Africa known as Le Maghreb. Click the question markers on each slide to discover additional ways to connect Northwest Africa to your life. Click the **NEXT** button to begin.




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Capital Cities

Capital Cities



Algiers, Algeria

Capitals:
Algiers
Rabat
Tunis

Sahara Desert crosses Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia

Recent independence

Immigrants in France

?

Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia constitute three countries in Northwest Africa that make up the region called Le Maghreb. The capital of Algeria is Algiers, the capital of Morocco is Rabat, and the capital of Tunisia is Tunis.

Many people live in the capitals and other major cities of these three countries; however, the southern part of Le Maghreb region is sparsely populated due to the unforgiving Sahara Desert. In fact, ninety percent of Algeria is the Sahara Desert!

These three countries were French colonies for several decades until the mid-1900s. Morocco and Tunisia became independent in 1956, and Algeria became independent in 1962. Several million people from Le Maghreb region are now immigrants in France.

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Language

Language



*Mural painting of Arabic calligraphy
in Asilah, Morocco*

?

- Official language is Arabic
- French widely spoken
- Former colonies of France
- Hundreds of dialects
- Difficult communication
- Challenges modernizing and growing economically

While the official language of all three countries in Le Maghreb is Arabic, French is widely spoken, and is the language used in schools. The French influence started during the many years that the three countries were colonies or protectorates of France. However, many citizens speak neither Arabic nor French on a daily basis. Rather, most use one of the hundreds of dialects spoken in small villages throughout the African countries. Since communication among groups is very difficult, the countries face challenges as they try to modernize and grow economically.

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Souks

Souks



Traditional souk in Djerba, Tunisia

Open-air market with many vendors

Bargain for products

Artisans make crafts

Morocco known for rugs, pottery, leather, copper

Tunisia known for rugs, pottery, copper, jewelry

Algeria known for rugs, jewelry, copper, leather, embroidery, ceramics

In the topic warm-up, you learned that a *souk* is an open-air market. If you have ever visited a bazaar, you have an idea of what it would be like to visit a souk. You would discover lots of vendors selling all kinds of products like fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, bright colored clothing, and crafts. However, if you visit a souk, do not pay the price that is marked. Vendors expect you to bargain, and you may find yourself getting a really good deal!

Artisans are the people who make the crafts found in souks, and they play a huge role in the economy of the region. Morocco is well known for rugs, pottery, leather products, and items made out of copper. Tunisian artisans also make rugs, pottery, and copper items, but in addition to these, they are known for beautiful handcrafted jewelry. In Algeria you will find rugs, jewelry, copper, and leather goods as well as embroidery and ceramics.

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Education

Education



University of Al Quaraoulyne in Fes, Morocco

Morocco: Mandatory school until thirteen

Algeria: Mandatory school until sixteen

Tunisia: Similar schools sytem to France

?

In Morocco, school is mandatory until age thirteen. Less than sixty percent of students continue to the high school level, and a little over ten percent continue school at the university level. Algeria's law requires children to attend school until age sixteen, but in reality, only about half of the students are enrolled in school after age thirteen. Schools in Tunisia are structured similarly to those in France. A higher percentage of students attend high school, and receive a higher education in Tunisia than in Algeria or Morocco.

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Food

Food



Spiced couscous

?

- Couscous
- Chicken, lamb, mutton
- Mint tea in Morocco
- Milk and dates in Algeria

Couscous is a typical food in Le Maghreb region that you can also find in the United States. It is most often served with broth, and can be spicy or mild. Typical meat consists of chicken, lamb, or mutton. In addition, if you visit Morocco, you might be offered mint tea, as a gesture of hospitality, and therefore it is polite to accept the drink. In Algeria, the traditional offering to guests is milk and dates.

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Fun Facts

Fun Facts



Caravan of camels going through the Sahara Desert in Morocco

?

- Roman ruins in Tunisia
- Camel ride in Sahara Desert
- Casablanca and soccer in Morocco
- Yves Saint Laurent and Albert Camus from Algeria

While visiting Tunisia, you can tour many Roman ruins, or even take a camel ride into the Sahara Desert. Morocco is home to the city of Casablanca, where the famous American movie, by the same name, was filmed. Soccer is the most popular sport in Morocco. Algeria is the birthplace of the famous fashion designer, Yves Saint Laurent, and the well-known writer Albert Camus. Camus wrote *The Stranger*, and won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1957.