

Alex Bourke of Vegetarian Guides discovers how to eat veggie in this vibrant North African destination.



MOROCCO

Morocco is a dream destination, just past Spain yet a world away, full of beautiful riads (houses) with interior courtyards, deserts, snow-capped mountains, beaches and 300 days of sun. Veggie options abound – just check for meat broth or, if vegan, butter, and to be safe take the *Vegan Passport* (see offer, below) unless you speak French or Arabic. The staples are vegetable salads, couscous with veg, and tagine – a Berber slow-cooked savoury stew served with bread. Popular soups are bisara – a thick green pea soup with cumin and olive oil – and harira, made with tomatoes, onions, chickpeas and lentils. Pick up snacks at the souk (market), such as local organic fruit, olives, nuts and seeds.

In the windsurfing capital Essaouira, head for **Shyadma's Vegan Food** in a quiet square in the old medina. Relax in the sun with olives, bread and local argan oil while they prepare a tagine – served sizzling in a pot also called a tagine – containing green beans and prunes, olives and lemon, onion, lentils or chickpeas. They also serve harira, salads, and a red bean, chickpea and lentil burger. Cool off at **Yoo**, a frozen yogurt café in the middle of the souk with shakes, smoothies, cold pressed juices, fruit and veg pots, and panini sandwiches.

In Marrakech there are two organic vegetarian **Earth Cafés** in back streets off Jemaa El Fna main square and market.

Their specialities are spring rolls, pastries stuffed with roast veg and herbs, burgers, veggies with lentils and rice, and apple tart for dessert. You can also reserve a place on their morning cookery classes and stay for lunch.

At **Afroux** vegetarian café, 100km east of Marrakech at the foot of the High Atlas mountains, owner Hassan is passionate about veggie food being better for the environment. Sip tea with raw almonds at a low wooden table on the vine-covered terrace, before tucking into a tagine with up to 20 local organic ingredients, flavoured with wild rosemary and garlic. For dessert, go for simple sliced melon and grapes, and coffee spiced with cinnamon and herbs.



Also recommended...

- **Triskala** in Essaouira is a tiny vegetarian and fish eco-restaurant with only local food such as couscous, spinach and melon salad, soup and falafels. Desserts include chocolate fondant and pear turnover.
- **Café Clock** in Fez and Marrakech marks veggie items on the English menu, such as Moroccan tapas, and even has breakfast muesli or pancakes with caramelised banana.
- **Dar Attajalli** boutique hotel in Fez has an upmarket rooftop restaurant specialising in vegetarian cuisine and open to non-residents.



- In Casablanca, local vegans recommend **Zayna** in Place Habous for traditional fare, or **Fresh & Co** for light lunches such as tabbouleh with organic lentils, quinoa salad, and grilled veg wraps.
- **Satvada Retreats** run yoga and mindfulness retreats for all levels and ages, with vegetarian catering, year-round in Marrakech and other locations.

NEED TO KNOW

Shyadma's Vegan Food

20 Rue Laalouj,
Place El Khayma, Essaouira
Tel: +212-6-15-28-72-08

Yoo

Facebook: Yoo Essaouira

Earth Café

www.earthcafemarrakech.com
Facebook: Earth Café Marrakech

Afroux Café

Imi-n-Ifri, Damnat
Tel: +212-6-73-877137

Triskala

Rue Touahen, Essaouira

Café Clock

www.cafeclock.com

Dar Attajalli

www.attajalli.com

Zayna

Facebook: Resto Zayna

Fresh & Co

Facebook: Fresh & Co

Satvada Retreats

www.satvada-retreats.co.uk

● For more info, visit
www.visitmorocco.com
www.lonelyplanet.com



ESSENTIAL GUIDE

Readers can buy the *Vegan Passport* (RRP £4.99) from Vegetarian Guides for the special price of £3.99, including p&p. The passport-sized book has a page for each of 74 languages, explaining what vegans do and don't eat. Visit www.vegetarianguides.co.uk/veglivingoct. Offer ends 31 October 2015.

