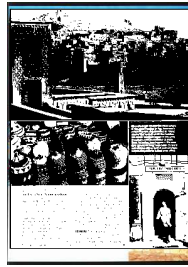


MOROCCO

With its minarets, medinas and fragrant mint tea, this mesmerising destination is a must, writes **Mike Dolan**.



Opposite page: One of the 9000 streets of the great medina in Fez, Morocco's oldest imperial city, founded in 790AD. Above: The kasbah of Ait Benhaddou, the oldest fortified citadel in the Atlas Mountains and the location of many films, including John Huston's *The Man Who Would Be King*, with Sean Connery and Michael Caine. Left: A stall of bright woven hats. Below: A local post office.



WHY IT'S A HOT DESTINATION

"LET'S LUNCH IN THE KASBAH" is an exotic enough thought to tempt many travellers to Morocco. Especially when lunch is a fragrant dish of lamb, dates and couscous, followed by a stroll through the labyrinthine streets of Fez, the world's oldest "living" medieval city. Yet, it's the sheer variety of sights and sounds that attract visitors to this fascinating North African kingdom. Besides Fez, there are the three other imperial cities: Meknes, Marrakesh and Rabat. In nine days you can see all four, take a camel ride into the Sahara to watch the sun rise over giant dunes, visit cedar forests high in the Atlas Mountains, where Barbary apes play in the

snow, and stroll through sweet-scented groves of peach blossom, while looking in awe at fortified citadels perched on rocky pinnacles. It's a land where bubbling springs in tranquil oases soothe the nerves; a land where acrobats and snake charmers work crowds to fever pitch each evening in the fabled Marrakeshi square, Djemaa El Fna. It takes little more than a week to travel through Morocco, a country so colourful it conjures tales from the *Arabian Nights*.

CONTACT: Sit back in a luxury coach and see Morocco in style on Insight Vacation's nine-day Amazing Morocco tour (from \$1499). To book, contact your local travel agent. Visit: www.insightvacations.com. ■