

SLEEP

MARRAKECH



It's more than 350 years since Marrakech last held the title of Morocco's capital, but in many ways it still feels like the heart of the country. International designers and bohemians have been drawn to the city for decades. And though Marrakech's fortunes have ebbed and flowed over the past millennium, tourism is booming right now. It's the mix of old and new that tends to captivate: art galleries sit alongside ancient tombs, while crumbling, labyrinthine alleys lead to gilded coffeehouses and chic garden cafes — all framed by the Atlas Mountains. Luxury hotels have sprung up on the city's outskirts like glittering palaces, but there's nothing quite like staying within the amber-hued walls of the 11th-century medina, where riads (traditional townhouses) offer memorable retreats.

WORDS: EMMA AL-MOUSAWI & LORNA PARKES



ALL RATES QUOTED ARE FOR STANDARD DOUBLES, ROOM-ONLY, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED. IMAGES: GETTY; NOBU HOTEL MARRAKECH

Best for chic urbanites

🏨 NOBU HOTEL
MARRAKECH

Nobu's first hotel in Africa debuted in the upmarket Hivernage district in 2023, swiftly becoming a magnet for trendy locals and travellers. Neutral hues are combined with Moroccan flair in the 71 rooms, accented by dashes of ruby red, Japanese-influenced artworks by a Marrakeshi calligrapher and brass metalwork lanterns. Dining is — as expected — one of the main events, with rotating entertainment from international DJs, fire breathers and belly dancers. However, it's the boho rooftop bar that's one of the hottest tickets in town. Crowned by a circular pool deck and cabanas reserved exclusively for hotel guests, it provides 360-degree city views, including the Koutoubia Mosque and Atlas Mountains beyond.

ROOMS: From 4,800 MAD (£394), B&B.
nobuhotels.com

SLEEP

Izza's Noujoum rooftop restaurant is known for its cocktails and DJ-led Saturday brunches. Clockwise from right: The terrace at Royal Mansour Marrakech's Sesamo restaurant; El Fenn's interiors are full of colour; art and culture is promoted in the rooms at Izza



Best for creativity

££ IZZA

If Izza was a person, she would be your achingly chic yet artistic friend. In the quieter northern reaches of the medina, the hotel's 14 rooms are named after icons from Marrakech's 1960s and 1970s bohemian high society like Yves (Saint Laurent) and Grace (Jones). Drawing inspiration from late interior designer Bill Willis — the man behind Yves Saint Laurent's lauded Villa Oasis in Jardin Majorelle — rooms fuse Moroccan tradition with curated vintage pieces. Art is woven into the fabric of the riad, with over 300 contemporary and digital NFT works on display. The exhibition includes emerging local artists who are part of Izza's annual Associate Artists Programme, which commissions pieces and provides a supportive platform for their work.

ROOMS: From €220 (£193), B&B, with a two-night minimum stay. izza.com

Best for wellness

£££ ROYAL MANSOUR MARRAKECH

Just a 10-minute stroll from the Jemaa el-Fna but hidden behind towering ochre walls, the king of Morocco's hotel acts as its own medina — albeit an extremely lavish one with a restaurant helmed by celebrated French chef Hélène Darroze and a store selling custom Louboutins. More than 1,000 artisans tiled, carved and hand-painted every inch of this glittering 13-acre resort; in October 2025, it ranked number 13 on the World's 50 Best Hotels list. There are no rooms here, only butler-serviced private riads. The 27,000sq ft spa is a standout feature: try the signature hammam ritual for a traditional scrub, cleanse, massage and pool dunk.

ROOMS: From 14,720 MAD (£1,209), B&B. royalmansour.com

Best for joyful colour

£££ EL FENN

Co-founded by art collector Vanessa Branson, El Fenn (translating to 'art' in Arabic) has been blazing a stylish trail in Marrakech for over 20 years and is one of the city's most sought-after stays. New Moroccan owners took the helm in November 2025 and are committed to preserving the hotel's spirited DNA and ethos of promoting art. Several towering riads merge here, providing the canvas for traditionally crafted elements and contemporary African art to pop against a vivid colour palette. Jewel-toned rooms with camel leather floors are accented with mid-century furniture, while the rooftop is decked out with striped parasols, under which guests sip Clementine Martinis poolside. There's also a new programme of art, fashion and interiors retreats.

ROOMS: From €487 (£429), B&B, plus afternoon tea. el-fenn.com



IMAGES: IZZA; ROYAL MANSOUR; TREAL CECILE/RUIZ JEAN-MICHEL

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Best for traditional tastes

££ **LE FARNATCHI**

Recently celebrating its 21st birthday, Le Farnatchi is a labour of its British owner's love for Moroccan artisanship and heritage. Despite encapsulating nine interconnecting riads, it houses just 10 suites, all spacious, with tasteful tilework and handmade beds as well as marble baths and fireplaces for cool winter evenings. One of the many draws for its loyal following is the attentive service. Another is rooftop restaurant Le Trou au Mur next door, which has a reputation for local dishes unlikely to be found elsewhere.

ROOMS: From 3,200 MAD (£262), B&B. lefaratchi.com

Best for location

£ **RIAD HELEN**

In Bab Doukkala, one of the medina's most mellow neighbourhoods, this peaceful, bright riad with seafoam-blue windows hides down a vine-clad lane. Each of its six rooms is decorated with vintage Amazigh rugs and traditional *zellige* tiles, while bathrooms feature silky Moroccan *tadelakt* plaster. Rooftop room Setta provides easy access to the terrace plunge pool. Mornings bring Moroccan *msemen* and *beghrir* pancakes with jam made by the riad's chefs, who also offer Moroccan cooking lessons.

ROOMS: From €90 (£79), B&B. riadhelen.com

Best for budget-seekers

£ **THE CENTRAL HOUSE**

One of the medina's best deals, The Central House is a sociable space, with a warren of courtyards and rooftop terraces inhabiting an old riad complex deep in the souks. At its heart is an in-house bar (unusual in the medina) and large tiled pool that attracts its fair share of Instagrammers, but its following is diverse — there are good-value family rooms and upmarket dorms as well as small doubles and suites. All are chic and contemporary, but with nods to local heritage.

ROOMS: From €44 (£39).
thecentralhousehostels.com

Best for modern minimalism

££ **RIAD UP**

Less is more at this pared-back riad that favours Balearic-influenced simplicity. Whitewashed walls, exposed brick and stripped wood help create an aura of tranquillity, flowing from the courtyard dip pool right up to the rooftop lounging area. There are six rooms, all with concrete floors, simple fireplaces, white linens and pops of colour from hand-woven rugs. The location is great, too, just off a quiet shopping street south of Jemaa el-Fna.

ROOMS: From €115 (£101), B&B. riadup.com



Best for relaxation

££ SIRAYANE BOUTIQUE HOTEL & SPA

A vision of contemporary Moroccan design, with flowering courtyards, olive trees and the Atlas Mountains as its backdrop, Sirayane is made for unwinding. The resort occupies a quiet spot in the city's rapidly evolving south west, but the buzz of the medina's Jemaa el-Fna is still an easy 25-minute ride away on the hotel's shuttle bus. Sirayane means 'flow' in Arabic, which is exactly what guests can do — moving from one of two swimming pools to sprawling day beds to dinner at the restaurant for flavourful Moroccan and international classics. Rooms feature lofty ceilings, velvet upholstery and terraces or balconies, while some suites feature private pools and gardens.

ROOMS: From £160, B&B, with a two-night minimum stay. sirayane.com

Best for cooling off

££ LES JARDINS DE LA MÉDINA

It's difficult to find a hotel pool within the medina much larger than a bathtub, but not at Les Jardins de la Médina. In the southern Kasbah district, this former prince's palace has been elegantly renovated and extended, but the highlights are undoubtedly its mature garden and over 1,000sq ft of swimmable, turquoise bliss. Despite royal beginnings, the hotel's vibe is unpretentious: after a morning haggling in the souk, guests can return to birdsong among orange trees and date palms and flop on a lounge with a mint-infused cocktail. Tranquillity ebbs into the recently renovated rooms, some with solariums, others with terraces. All mix modern comforts and traditional flair, with muted archway doors, lattice-work cabinetry inspired by *mashrabiya* riad windows and billowing white drapes.

ROOMS: From €266 (£234), B&B. lesjardinsdelamedina.com

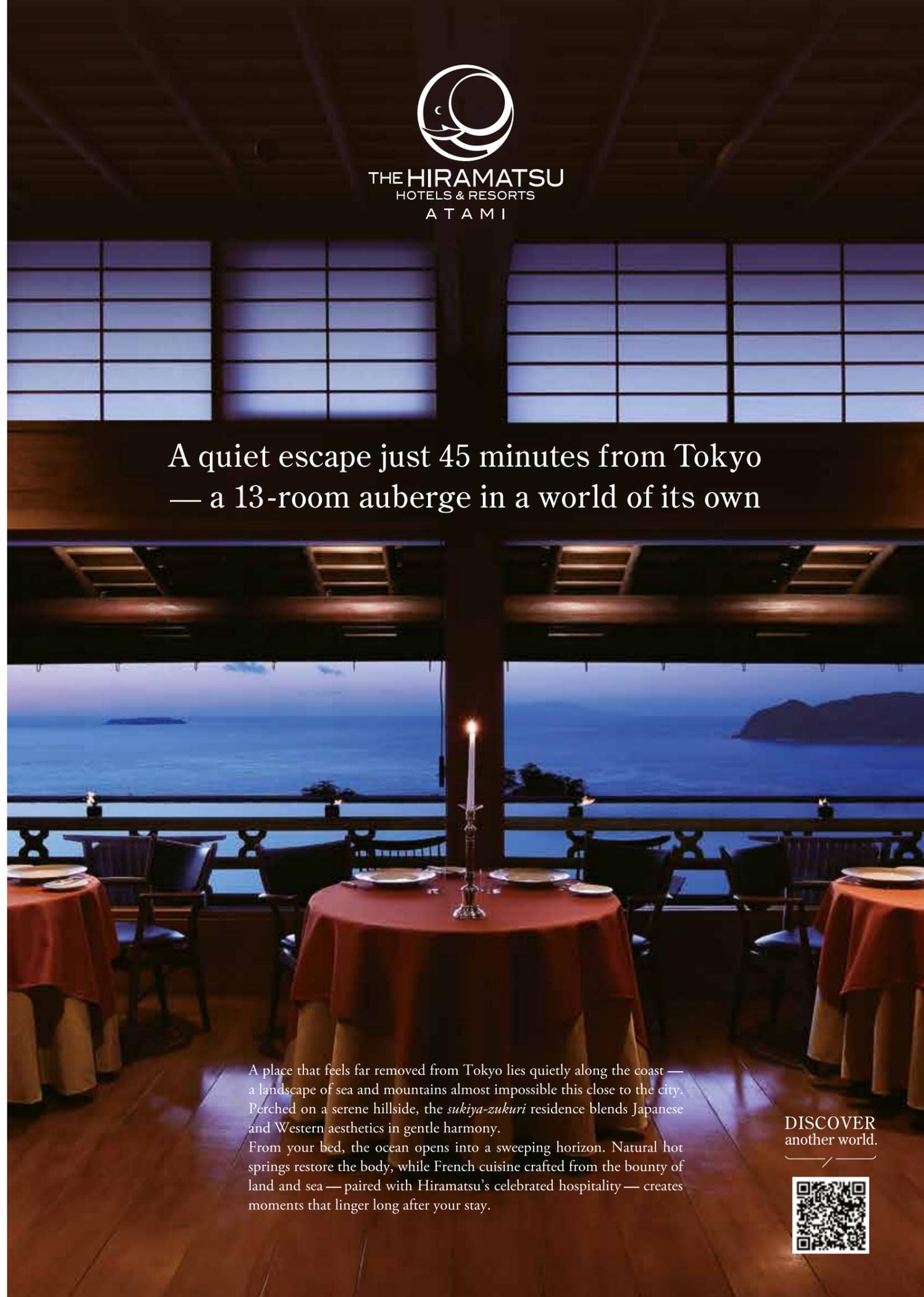
From top: Sirayane's suites have a contemporary feel; the large pool at the heart of Les Jardins de la Médina

IMAGES: MEHDI MOUNIR; JEROME MONDIERE



THE HIRAMATSU
HOTELS & RESORTS
ATAMI

A quiet escape just 45 minutes from Tokyo
— a 13-room auberge in a world of its own



A place that feels far removed from Tokyo lies quietly along the coast — a landscape of sea and mountains almost impossible this close to the city. Perched on a serene hillside, the *sukiya-zukuri* residence blends Japanese and Western aesthetics in gentle harmony.

From your bed, the ocean opens into a sweeping horizon. Natural hot springs restore the body, while French cuisine crafted from the bounty of land and sea — paired with Hiramatsu's celebrated hospitality — creates moments that linger long after your stay.

DISCOVER
another world.

