



## MEKNES THROUGH HISTORY

Founded in the 10th century by the Zenata tribe Meknassa, then conquered by the Almoravids, was first a military site (11th century) that thrived under the Almohads dynasty (12th century), and grew more in the following century under the Merinids. It was until the end of the 17th century, and the crowning of the second Alawite sultan, when the city achieved its status as an imperial city. Moulay Ismail gave it its outstanding rise.

## Moulay Ismail Mausoleum



Originally, it was a mosque built by the sultan Ahmed Al Mansour Eddahbi, then it became the rest shelter for Moulay Ismail and all members of his family. It is among the rare religious sites open to non muslims in Morocco. Inside, you can find a secular room orned with four comtises clocks, a gift from Louis XIV to the Sultan.

## Heri Souani and Dar Al Ma



The most prestigious building in the Imperial City, remarkable for its impressive size, consisting of 2 large parts:

- Dar Al Ma (water house) is the covered part of the monument including ten well rooms which water supply was through underground pipes that feed the wells as well as the large water basin called "Sahrij Souani" located next to this building.
- The Granaries, also known as Stables, which ceilings collapsed during the Lisbon earthquake that struck North Africa in 1755, are made up of several series of arcades which collapsed ceilings mark the beginning of the collapsed vaults.

## Sahrij Souani



Large extended reservoirs of water in the form of pond, dating from the Ismaili period (late 17th century), located in the imperial city, and situated to the north-west of the Granaries. It is a hydraulic structure that measures 149 meters by 319 , with a depth of about 3 meters. The basin was supplied with water, at the beginning, by the ten norias of the neighboring building (Dar Al Ma), connected to it by terracotta pipes, beneath, there was a dozen underground aquifers. That was the reason of the origin of the name Sahrij Souani (the basin of Norias).

## National Haras of Meknes



Created in 1912, The Haras of Meknes is the oldest of the national stud farms. Classified as a historical heritage of the city and surrounded by a wall, the national haras of Meknes covers an area of nearly 67 hectares, among which 40 are occupied by the racecourse orbit. It contains the only national jumble beard and production of Barbes and Arab-Barbes horses, 78 stallions and an equestrian club.

## Mansour Palace



Imposing remains are still apparent from that building founded in the beginning of the 18th century, the Mansour Palace combines with its watchtower and bastion functions, those of an armament depot, a reservoir of grains and a princely residence.

## Borj Bel Kari Museum



Dedicated to the pottery of the Rif and Pre-Rif regions, this museum first opened in 2004 and takes its name from Borj Bel Kari, a great historic bastion dating back to the time of Moulay Ismail. Covering an area of 3,000 square meters, this tower was part of the defensive system of the Kasbah of Meknes. Considering its historical and architectural significance, it was enlisted as a historic monument since 1932.

## Royal Golf



In the heart of the Imperial City, the Royal Golf of Meknes (9 holes) is the only closed golf course in Africa. It has a special atmosphere with its golf-garden immersed in a park with a thousand flowers, it is an integral part of the Royal Palace of Meknes. It was in 1969 that His Majesty the late Hassan II graciously made it available for the Meknassi population. Going up the course, the golfers cross the history of the city, and follow the ramparts where the storks nestle.

## Pavilion of Ambassadors



An isolated pavilion of square shape, dating from the end of the 17th century, formed of a single rectangular room. It is located inside the Imperial City, south-west of Bab Mansour Gate. This pavilion served as a courtroom where Sultan Moulay Ismail received foreign ambassadors and emissaries visiting Meknes. On its hall back wall, a plaque commemorating the inscription of the historic city of Meknes on the World Heritage List by Unesco on December 7th 1996.



## MEKNES : OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

On December, 7th 1996, the worldwide heritage committee held in its 20th meeting in Merida, Mexico, enlisted Meknes on the world list of Unesco. This tribute consecrated the outstanding universal value of Meknes, as a world heritage city that should be protected for the benefit of humanity.

## Habs Qara



Near the Ambassadors' Pavilion is Habs Qara (Qara Prison), named on a Portuguese prisoner. It is a vast underground staircase which architecture and its striking resemblance to the Attic of Heri Souani, suggests that its original function was to store foodstuffs and that it could have been used temporarily as a prison in time of war and hostilities with foreign countries.

## Lalla Aouda Square



With a rectangular plan, delimited on both sides with imposing walls which constitute the fortified enclosure of the first imperial residence. Formerly, it was reserved for official outings of the Sultan and parades of cavalry men of Moulay Ismail.

## Meknes Museum



This small museum is devoted to traditional arts and crafts. You can see many traditional costumes, as well as the most varied handicrafts, from carpet to pottery, not to mention the tools that were used in their fabrication.

## Lahdim Square



In front of Bab Mansour, Lahdim Square startles with its large dimensions. Meeting point of the medina and the imperial city, this vast esplanade is a must-see passage as an access to the souks. Currently, the square is animated by Halkas (oral traditions of counting popular stories) especially during the evening, where troops and speakers present their shows. The south-west side of the square is occupied by the market of the city of Meknes which is worth seeing.

## Dar Jamai Palace



This vast residence built in 1882, belonged to Mohamed Ben Larbi Jamaï, Grand Vizier (minister) of Sultan Moulay Hassan I (1873-1894). In 1912, the French made it a military hospital called "Hôpital Louis". Since 1920, this palace houses an ethnographic museum. It was the first museum center of Morocco.

## Jamaâ Al Kabir (Big Mosque)



Founded by the Almoravids in the 12th century, remodeled several times during the time of the Almohads, Merinides and especially during the reign of Moulay Ismail. It is characterized by its large area (3,500 square meters), its 164 arcades and beautiful carved eaves.

## Al Bouanania Medersa



This Medersa (traditional school) would be contemporary to the Medersa Al Bouânia of Fez, completed around 1345 at the time of the Merinid Sultan Abu Al Hassan. This masterpiece of hispano-moorish style is built according to classical plans of Coranic school: central courtyard with basin, surrounded by a gallery and a prayer room and on the floor, several tiny cells for students.

### MEKNES : OUTSTANDING HERITAGE VALUE

Moulay Ismail made of Meknes an impressive city of a moorish-hispanic style, that shows, up to now, the perfect harmony of islamic and european styles, in architecture as well as in urbanism terms, in the Maghreb of the 17th century. The historic city of Meknes influenced considerably, the development of the civil and military architecture (the kasbah) and artistic masterpieces. This is what gave this heritage its universal value.

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## A TRIP TO AN IMPERIAL CITY

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