

FAQs

About us

1. How long have you been established for?

Lessane Arabi Center was founded by Salim El Jeddaoui in 2015. Since that time we have provided the highest quality tuition to Arabic language learners from all over the world.

2. What makes Lessane Arabi Center different to other Arabic language schools?

Our core philosophy is "Education through Immersion". This means we not only provide a language-learning programme tailored to your needs, but we also offer an exciting programme of cultural immersion activities, which allow you to dive into Moroccan culture while learning the Arabic language. We also put a particularly focus on conversation skills, helping you to be able to communicate in Arabic from the first lesson.

3. What kind of students attend Lessane Arabi Center's courses?

A wide range of students, of all ages, and from countries around the world attend our center. Throughout the year the average age of our students is 35, while in the summer it is 21 (as many university students attend during their summer break).

4. Is there a minimum age to attend the courses?

The minimum age to attend Lessane Arabi Center is 6 years old, as long as they are mature and ready to learn -- we welcome students of all ages!

5. Who are the teachers?

Our teachers are native speakers, who will immerse you in the Arabic language from day one. They all have university degrees in teaching Arabic as a foreign language.

Learning Arabic

1. Is Arabic hard to learn?

Arabic is often thought of as one of the hardest languages to learn for native speakers of European languages. However, while there are challenges to learning Arabic (for example getting to know a different alphabet), there are a lot of features that are arguably simpler than many European languages. At Lessane Arabi Center, our experienced teachers ensure learning Arabic is achievable and approachable for everyone.

2. What types of Arabic do you teach?

At Lessane Arabi Center, we teach Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Darija (the local Moroccan dialect).

3. How long does it take to learn Arabic?

As with any language learning, each student will progress at different rates, depending on their previous experience, the intensity of their course, and the amount of practise they do outside of class time. However, rough guides of the time it takes to complete each stage of our MSA and Darija courses can be found on this page: <https://arabic.ma/programs>

4. How different is Darija (Moroccan Arabic) from MSA?

Darija is the everyday language of Morocco (but will struggle to be understood by speakers of other Arabic dialects outside of North Africa) while MSA is the language of formal written communication and news broadcasts. Although they share some vocabulary and grammatical structures, there are also many differences in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. For example, Darija borrows words from Amazigh, French and Spanish.

5. My university Arabic program includes Egyptian or Levantine dialects. Will this be a problem for my Arabic education in Morocco?

Some universities take a dual approach to teaching Arabic, teaching a dialect to enable quick communication while also teaching MSA. Although the dialect Lessane Arabi Center offers is Darija, you can enroll in our center's MSA courses which will support and further your university's MSA

program. If you are already learning another Arabic dialect, we would advise against learning Darija as well (beyond a few key phrases) as this could become confusing and hinder your progress.

6. Can I learn MSA and Darija at the same time?

We offer the option to learn Darija alongside MSA via two separate courses. It is important that students approach Darija and MSA as two separate languages to avoid confusion and misinterpretation of either language.

Pre-departure and arrival

1. Do I need a visa to come to Morocco?

Many countries' citizens, including EU countries, the UK, Australia, Turkey, China, Canada and the USA, do not require a visa to enter Morocco and can stay for up to 90 days. A full list of visa-exempt countries and information on how to obtain a visa if you are a citizen of another country is available here: <https://www.consulat.ma/en/list-countries-whose-citizens-are-exempted-entry-visa-morocco>

2. What should I pack?

- For your studies you will need to bring a notebook and pens/pencils to make notes. Students normally purchase textbooks from us, but if you are already using a particular textbook and would like to continue using it at Lessane Arabi Center then please get in touch.
- You should also ensure you pack toiletries (including insect repellent and sunscreen) and season-appropriate clothing. Temperatures commonly reach more than 30°C and 40°C from May-September, but between November and February temperatures at night can be as low as 10°C. It is unusual for Moroccan buildings to be heated so you will need to bring some warm clothing if you are here at this time of year.
- Discounts for Marrakech's museums and attractions are often available for students and people with disabilities -- if you have a student or disability card remember to bring it to receive discounted entry.

3. How to do I exchange my home currency for Moroccan dirhams?

Moroccan dirhams are a closed currency, meaning they are not widely available outside Morocco. Although it is sometimes possible to exchange a small amount of Moroccan dirhams in your home country, the exchange rate is normally much worse than if you were to exchange your money upon arrival. We recommend exchanging a small amount of money at the airport (either at the exchange desks or at the ATMs) and then exchanging a more substantial amount once you are settled in your accommodation. The rates of ATMs and certain bureaux de changes in the city are better than at the airport. Cash is the dominant form of payment method in Morocco. While some larger shops in Marrakech will accept card, you should always ensure you have some cash with you.

4. How do I get from the airport to Lessane Arabi Centre?

Marrakech Menara Airport (RAK) is the most conveniently located airport to reach Lessane Arabi Center. If you let us know your arrival time beforehand we can arrange for someone to pick you up or advise you on getting a taxi to our center. You can also fly into Mohammed V Airport in Casablanca. From here you can take a shuttle train to Casablanca train station and then a train to Marrakech train station -- this will not cost more than 200 Dhs. From Marrakesh train station we will either arrange to pick you up or you will take a taxi. The taxi should cost no more than 15 Dhs during the day or 20 Dhs at night.

5. Is there a placement test? What does it involve?

Unless you are a complete beginner, we ask you to do a short placement test on arrival. This is nothing to worry about and there is no need to prepare for it. It will just help us to ensure that we pitch your lessons at the correct level.

6. What should I do if I feel my classes are the wrong level?

Let us know immediately -- we will always try to adapt our programme to ensure it is tailored to your level.

Courses and classes

1. How long should I come to study at Lessane Arabi Center?

The length of time you study at Lessane Arabi depends on your schedule and needs. Our MSA group sessions (<https://arabic.ma/msa-group-sessions>) start at a minimum of 1 week and our Darija group sessions (<https://arabic.ma/darija-mca-group-sessions>) start at a minimum of 3 weeks.

2. What level do I need to be to attend your courses?

Lessane Arabi Center welcomes students of any level, from complete beginner to near-fluent. In fact, the majority of students who attend our classes are beginners.

3. How will the language be taught? What can I expect in a class?

We tailor our classes to your needs, so -- at your request -- we can focus on a particular element of Arabic language-learning e.g. listening, translation, text comprehension, conversation skills. However, all our classes do take a "education through immersion" approach so you can expect that you and your teacher will be speaking Arabic from day one! We encourage you and our teachers to communicate in Arabic as much as possible, building your speaking, comprehension and communication skills.

4. When do your courses start?

Our individual classes have a flexible start date -- let us know when you would like to start on your application form and we will get back to you. The start dates of our MSA group sessions are listed on this page (our Darija group sessions have a flexible start date): <https://arabic.ma/msa-group-sessions>.

5. What if I miss a class owing to illness or other commitments?

If you miss a group class we are unfortunately unable to refund or reorganise it as the other learners will still be attending the lesson. If you are unable to attend an individual lesson you will need to give us at least 48 hours notice in order to reschedule the lesson, otherwise we will not be able to reschedule it.

6. What happens if my teacher is off on the day our class is scheduled?

If Lessane Arabi Center has to cancel your lesson for any reason we will give you as much notice as possible and reschedule it for within 15 days. If it is not possible to rearrange (e.g. if you will shortly be leaving Marrakech), then we will give you credit for the equivalent Skype session.

7. How many students are there in a class?

If you have booked a group lesson there will be between 3 and 6 learners in a class. If fewer than 3 people sign up to your group class we will offer you two options:

- Halve your lesson time (e.g. a 1 hour session instead of a 2 hour session) and continue to pay the group price. This reflects the extra student-teacher interaction you will have in a smaller class size.
- Have the full number of hours originally requested at the higher dual or individual price.

8. How long is a lesson?

You can book your lessons by the hour, or through a package offering a certain number of lessons in a week. Our MSA group courses and study abroad packages range from 3 - 6 hours of teaching per day.

9. Do I receive a certificate at the end of the program?

Yes, Lessane Arabi can provide you with a certificate, outlining the content you studied, the hours you studied, and your level of attainment following the completion of your course.

10. Does Lessane Arabi Center close during Moroccan public holidays?

Lessane Arabi is open during all holidays apart from: Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha (the dates of these holidays change each year), Anniversary of the Green March (6th November) and Independence Day (18th November).

11. Do classes still run during Ramadan?

Classes will still run during Ramadan, and our centre closes at the slightly earlier time of 5pm.

12. What should I do if I'm unsure which course is best for me?

Contact us! We are always happy to advise on which course we think will be the best fit for you.

Paying for your course

1. What do the course fees include?

- Our individual and group lessons include the price of your lessons -- there are various prices/hour and set offers depending on group size and the intensity of the program. You can find out more about the options on the "Sessions & Fees" pages of our website
- Our study abroad package includes the price of accommodation and airport transport in addition to your lessons. You can find out more about our study abroad package here: <https://arabic.ma/study-abroad-package>
- All students will also need to pay our annual inscription (280 dirhams) and the cost of any textbooks they need for their course.

2. Can I receive funding or scholarships to study at Lessane Arabi Center?

Although Lessane Arabi Center does not offer any scholarships directly, many of our students are able to secure full or partial funding through their university, school or college to attend our courses.

3. How far in advance do I need to organise my trip and course with Lessane Arabi?

It is a good idea to organise your trip as far in advance as possible. This will secure you the best chance of finding suitable accommodation and allow you to take advantage of cheaper flight prices.

4. When do I need to pay for my course?

You must pay 50% of your course fees within 30 days of the start of the course. This is refundable up to 30 days before the course starting, and non-refundable after this point. The remaining 50% of the fees must be paid before the 1st day of the course. These are non-refundable.

5. How do I pay for my course?

You can pay for your course via bank transfer (the most practical option if you are not currently in Marrakech) or by cheque or cash at our Center. Please note we do not accept card payment.

Accommodation

1. Do you offer accommodation?

Lessane Arabi Center has 3 onsite rooms, sleeping 5 people, as well as a terrace, kitchen, bathroom and indoor communal area. If you would prefer to stay elsewhere or if all our rooms are full during your preferred dates, then we can assist you with finding an apartment for a fee of 150 dirhams. (We cannot guarantee we will find you an appropriate apartment and the 150 dirhams is only payable if we are successful -- see this link for details <https://arabic.ma/housing-and-food>) For study abroad groups we can also often arrange accommodation in our partner riad (guesthouse) -- please contact us.

2. Where is the accommodation located?

Our accommodation is located at our center, in the quiet and leafy neighbourhood of Semlalia-Gueliz. This is a quick bus ride from the old city and a 20 minute walk/5 drive from the busy shopping area of the new town. Our partner riad is located in the old city (medina).

3. What is provided in the accommodation?

At our Center's accommodation bedding is provided, but you will need to bring your own towels and toiletries. We also provide a washing machine for a small charge per wash.

Our accommodation is offered at extremely reasonable rates. In order to keep these costs low we ask that you regularly clean your room and communal areas with the cleaning materials we provide.

Student Life

1. What happens outside the classroom?

We find the students that get the most out of their experience here are those who ensure they find some time to revise what they have learnt each day, as well as explore all that Marrakech has to offer! Our center's accommodation provides a quiet place to work in the evenings and has free wifi. We can help organise a range of cultural immersion activities during your stay (see below).

2. Does Lessane Arabi offer trips or excursions?

Lessane Arabi prides itself on offering you a widely varied cultural programme. For study abroad groups we can provide a programme of various things to do in and around Marrakech. We can advise individual students on places to go or invite them on our group trips when these are running. We also

offer cookery workshops and calligraphy workshops at our centre, which are a great way for our students to gain an insight into Moroccan and Arabic culture.

Please note that the cost of entry to attractions and museums in Marrakech are in addition to the study abroad package/ the cost of lessons.

3. How do I get around Marrakech?

Marrakech is an easy city to travel round -- there are many taxis which can easily be hailed and there is an extensive bus service. The old city (medina) is ideal for walking around. Lessane Arabi has a transport information sheet you can read on your arrival and also has a bike hire scheme if you would like to explore the city by bike.

4. What is Marrakech like?

Marrakech can sometimes be a "culture-shock" for Western visitors as -- particularly in the old city (medina) -- there is a lot of hustle and bustle and lots of vendors attempting to grab your attention. In the new city of Gueliz and in the Menara Mall in the Hivernage district there is a different atmosphere -- with many well-known high-street brands as opposed to the old markets (souks) of the Medina. During your stay here you will find yourself becoming familiar and at ease with all that Marrakech has to offer, and the busy streets will become less overwhelming.

5. How expensive is it to stay in Marrakech?

Marrakech is a city that accommodates a vast range of budgets. While there are plenty of high-end restaurants, hotels and boutiques, it is also very possible to live cheaply here. You can keep within a tight budget by using the bus to travel (which is cheaper than a taxi), shopping for food in your local area, and using your accommodation's cooking facilities or eating out in local cafes. Making the most of the cafes and shops close to Lessane Arabi Center will also give you a great opportunity to practise your Arabic!

Health and Safety

1. How safe is Marrakech/Morocco?

Morocco and Marrakech are widely regarded as very safe places. While serious crime is very unusual, you will need to be aware of your bag (or things in it) being stolen, verbal harassment (particularly targeted at women), and scams. These predominantly happen in the busy tourist and shopping areas. You can reduce the risk of these things happening to you by ignoring or politely refusing strangers' attempts to get your attention or engage you in conversation, and by keeping your bags securely closed and on your person at all times.

Women can reduce the amount of harassment they are likely to receive by dressing modestly (see question 4) and by avoiding eye contact with men. If you experience harassment that goes beyond a few comments (i.e. you are being followed, inappropriately touched etc.), you should get the attention of other people around you. Moroccans will rarely turn a blind eye to situations such as this.

2. Do I need to take any health precautions while I am here?

Yes, there are some health precautions you can take while you are in Morocco:

- Drinking bottled water, and avoiding ice made from tap water or raw food washed in tap water. (Many Moroccans drink tap water, but it is advisable for travellers who are not used to the tap water to drink bottled instead.)
- Avoiding food from street vendors.
- Only drinking/eating pasteurized dairy products.
- Avoiding touching or stroking any animals -- particularly those that live on the streets.
- Using insect repellent to reduce your risk of mosquito bites.

3. Do I need to get vaccinated before I come to Morocco?

While there are no required vaccines for coming to Morocco, you should check with your healthcare provider at least 6 weeks before you leave to ensure your vaccinations are up to date and to discuss any recommended vaccines they suggest. If you plan to volunteer here, you should check whether any of the organisations you will work with require you to have any additional vaccinations.

4. Are there any local customs, laws or norms I need to be aware of?

Islam is the state religion of Morocco. It is one of the more liberal and progressive Islamic countries, particularly in tourist centres like Marrakech. Things to be aware of include:

- Alcohol -- alcohol is legal and widely available in Morocco. However, you should not consume alcohol in public places (e.g. on the street or in a park) and you are not permitted to consume alcohol at Lessane Arabi Center.
- Women's dress -- Although there are no laws regarding women's dress (i.e. there is no law requiring you to cover your hair or dress modestly) it is a good idea to wear items of clothing that cover your knees and shoulders and have a modest neckline. While you might find you feel comfortable dressing less modestly (particularly in certain areas), dressing modestly can help reduce the amount of verbal harassment you receive, particularly in the old city (medina).
- Sexuality -- you should avoid public displays of affection beyond a greeting hug and holding hands. Homosexuality is illegal in Morocco.
- Photography -- you should always ask before photographing anyone you don't know and respect their response.