Walt Disney World News

‘Jewel of Africa’ Shines in Epcot’s Morocco Showcase

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — From Berber Oasis to Restaurant Marrakesh, the Morocco showcase at Walt Disney World Epcot captures the mystery and excitement of the exotic North African kingdom.

For World Showcase guests, the first glimpse of Morocco will likely be the Koutoubia Minaret, the famous prayer tower in Marrakesh which stands guard over the entrance.

Located just across the promenade from the tower is Berber Oasis. A sampling of the handicrafts for which Morocco is famous is on display in this tent near World Showcase Lagoon.

In the same area, an ancient waterwheel lifts water from the lagoon to a formal garden. It’s a relaxing, shady spot with colorful floral beds and the soothing sounds of splashing water flowing down wooden troughs. The scene re-creates a typical Moroccan desert garden.

The Medina, or old city, portion of the pavilion allows guests to experience the feeling of a bustling Moroccan marketplace. Shoppers browsing among the thousands of authentic Moroccan crafts will find straw baskets, woodcarvings, custom jewelry, leather goods, brass pots and much more.

A source of pride with designers of the showcase is the architecture. King Hassan II took a personal interest in the pavilion and, prior to actual construction, studied a scale model for authenticity and artistic effect.

Moroccan art is featured throughout the showcase and the Moroccan government helped arrange for master artisans to create the detailed geometric patterns in the buildings characteristic of Islamic style and color. These artisans also supervised installation of the ornate woodcarvings and roofing tiles created in Morocco especially for the showcase.

A traditional fountain, inspired by the Najjarine Fountain in Fez, is a centerpiece in the showcase courtyard.

Morocco showcase boasts one of Epcot’s most interesting dining experiences. The Tangierine Cafe, housed in the Koutoubia Minaret, serves a variety of Moroccan sandwiches and specialty pastries.

Inside the arched columns, beamed ceilings and massive carved wooden doors of Restaurant Marrakesh, the guest dining experience is transformed into a setting typical of an elaborate Southern Moroccan fortress. Its rich tones and textures compliment the aroma and taste of Moroccan foods such as couscous (a coarse wheat, steamed and served with lamb or chicken), bastilla (a flaky meat pie) and lemon chicken with garlic, green olives and preserved lemon. Sweetened tea or a steaming cup of Moroccan coffee rounds out the meal.

Adding authentic charm to the Restaurant Marrakesh experience, belly dancers accompanied by a Moroccan musician perform daily.

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