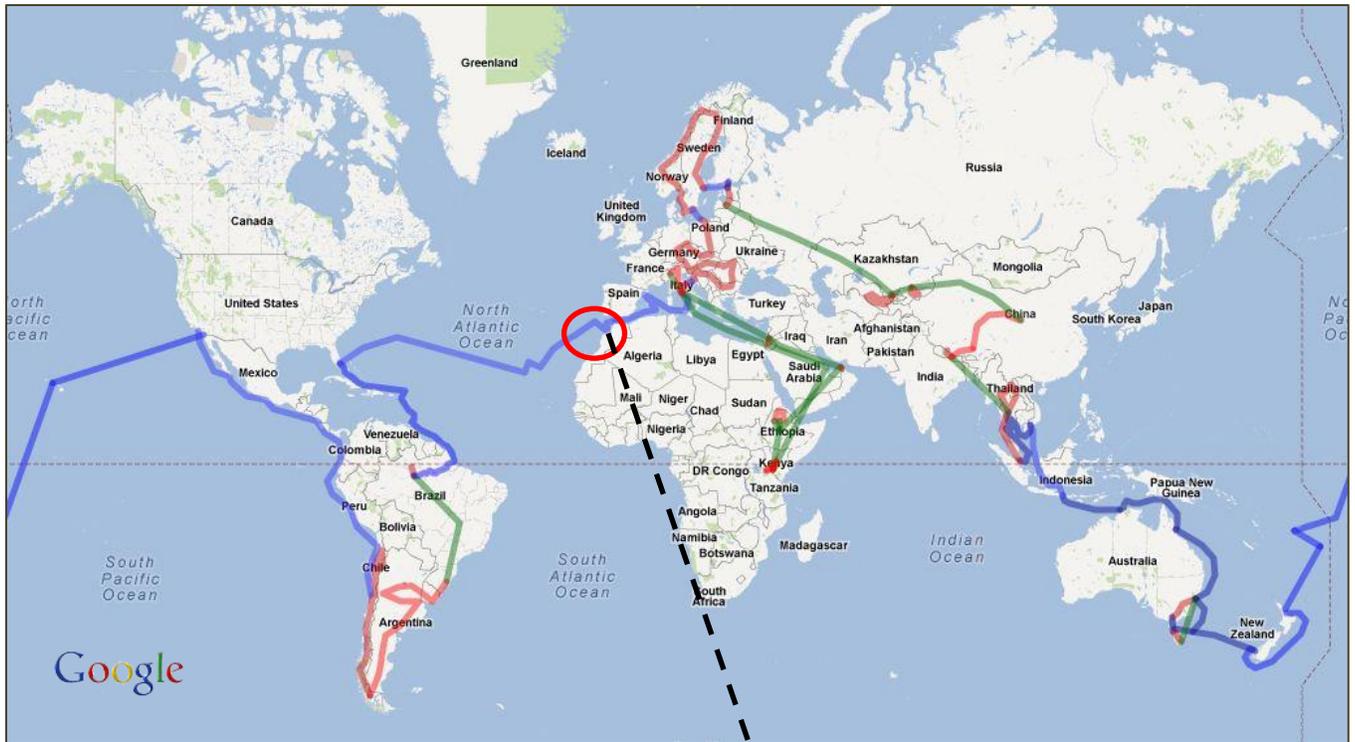




Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Casablanca, Morocco, located at 33° N and 7° W.
- We have traveled approximately 48,275 miles (77,691 kilometers) from our starting point in California.



People and Culture

- With a population of over three million, Casablanca is Morocco's largest city. It is regarded as the business and financial center of the country.
- Over the years, the city was ruled by many powers, including the Berbers, Portuguese, Spanish and French. The Spanish called it Casa Blanca, meaning "white house", which was adapted from the Portuguese name for the city.
- During World War II, Casablanca was the location of an American air base and the title of a classic American film. Morocco became a French colony in 1912 and independent in 1956.
- Nicknamed "The Rock", Gibraltar is not far from Casablanca. In Greek mythology, Gibraltar was known as one of the Pillars of Hercules, which marked the edge of then-known world.
- An Islamic invasion of the Spanish peninsula was led from Gibraltar in 711 AD. Gibraltar was ceded by the Spanish to Great Britain in 1713. It became a British colony in 1830.
- Today, the approximately 28,000 residents are British citizens and voted in 1967 and 2002 to remain a British colony.

Did you know?

Casablanca's Hassan II Mosque is the second largest mosque and third largest religious structure in the world. The mosque building can accommodate up to 25,000 people and the courtyard can hold another 80,000 individuals. Two hundred people are needed to clean the mosque daily. It was completed in 1993 after taking seven years to build.



Casablanca with the Hassan II Mosque in the background (sources: TravelAdvisorTips.com, World66.com (Peter Horvath))



The Gibraltar rock overlooking the city (source: thecommongroundblog.com)

Gibraltar Apes

Known as Barbary Apes or Rock Apes, the Barbary Macaques are a group of monkeys that populate the upper rock of Gibraltar. They originally came from North Africa and are a popular Gibraltar tourist attraction. There is a legend that as long as the macaques are in Gibraltar that it will stay under British rule. During World War II, the population reduced to just seven and Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered more animals to be imported because of this belief. Today, there are about 300 macaques in Gibraltar.



sources: [Flickr.com/Kjell Jøran Hansen](https://www.flickr.com/photos/kjelljoran/), [Wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbary_macaque)



Aerial view of the Strait of Gibraltar; Europe is on the left and Africa on the right (source: [Ask.com](https://www.ask.com))

Nature and Environment

- Casablanca enjoys a warm and arid climate. It has an average overall temperature of 63°F (17°C) and a mean of 1.5 inches (35.48 millimeters) of rain monthly.
- The city has one of the largest artificial ocean ports in the world. Exports include fish, textiles and building materials and leather work.
- Gibraltar is only 2 1/4 square miles (5.8 square kilometers) in size.
- The Rock of Gibraltar consists of limestone and rises to a height of 1,396 feet (425 meters). There are caves located within the rock that can be visited today. Two types of wind affect the rock. One type is a warm breeze with moisture that causes cold and fog. The other wind brings hot, clear and dry weather.
- The Strait of Gibraltar segregates Spain in Europe from Morocco in Africa and is the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea from the Atlantic Ocean. At its narrowest point, Europe and Africa are only a few miles apart. A ferry trip between the two continents takes as little as 35 minutes to complete.

Our Plans

- We spent a day in Gibraltar. While in Casablanca, we plan to take a closer look at the Hassan II Mosque and enjoy some Moroccan food while in the city.
- After a day at sea, we will visit the small island of Maderia, which is part of Portugal.
- We will then spend five days crossing the Atlantic Ocean until we reach the island of Bermuda, about 600 miles (1,000 kilometers) off the coast of the United States.
- What questions do you have about our ocean crossing or the places we are visiting? Send us an email or post on our Facebook or Twitter.

More Information

- <http://looklex.com/e.o/casablanca.htm>
- <http://www.climate-charts.com/Locations/f/FM60155.php>
- <http://www.gibnet.com/weather.htm>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casablanca>
- <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/facts-about-casablanca-morocco.html>
- <http://www.nileguide.com/destination/gibraltar-gibraltar/overview/local-info>

Moroccan Cuisine

Moroccan food uses a variety of spices, such as cumin, cinnamon, ginger and turmeric. Bread is an important part of every meal. Because meals are eaten with only the hands, bread is used to pick up food. Couscous is a common meal on Fridays, the day of prayer. It is made with meat and vegetables, such as the lamb couscous (pictured below).



sources: Fescooking.com,
Riadzany.blogspot.com

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