

A full-page photograph of a surfer in a black wetsuit riding a wave. The surfer is positioned in the upper right quadrant, leaning forward on a white surfboard. A large, powerful wave is breaking behind them, creating a massive spray of white water. The ocean is a deep blue-green color. Overlaid on the image is large, yellow, cursive text that reads "Surfing Mo'au style".

Surfing

Mo'au

style



Morocco

Morocco's surfing culture is making waves, proving there is more to the North African country than cities and souqs

Words: **Louise Quick** // Images: **Martin Ried**

Morocco is a country full of cultures and contradictions. On first thought, minds wander to scenes of exotic souqs packed with a confusion of sights, smells and swarming tourists, most likely set among the backdrop of historic cities such as Marrakesh or Fez.

Head to the coast, however, where Morocco looks out over the Atlantic and a considerably more laid back side of the North African country is revealed.

For decades surfers have flowed into small unsuspecting towns along its coastline drawn by the vast stretches of surf. The most reliable waves are found

further south and Taghazout – a sleepy fishing village just north of the city Agadir – is full most of the year with surfers from near and far. One such visitor is German photographer and surfer Martin Ried.

“Morocco still has those feral places where you can just be on your own and enjoy the beauty of nature,” describes Ried, whose passion for surfing and capturing it on film has seen him travel to western Europe, Bali and Australia.

“Surfing gets you to places off the beaten track and many are amazing spots that you just have to photograph.”

While the best swells can be found in





the winter months (October to March), the summer is ideal for those wishing to learn in slightly less intimidating waters. There are no end of surf camps, particularly in and around Taghazout, and many offer yoga classes to help novices unwind after a hard day in the water.

“I can’t really compare Morocco to any other country,” Ried says. “There are great spots everywhere, most people are super friendly, you can travel very cheaply and get some of the best food.”

Surfers may have a relaxed and easygoing reputation, but they can also be a territorial bunch and as Morocco’s popularity as a surfing destination continues to grow the waters can get crowded during peak season. As such, many of the regulars are protective of the quieter ‘secret’ beaches.

“Most of the good spots that you will read about on the internet are crowded almost everyday [in winter] and nobody likes crowded surf,” Ried explains.

“There are always locals at the secret spots and sometimes they can get aggressive if they see you showing up with 10 of your friends. But most of the time it’s all good as long as you show them the necessary respect.”

Rules of the waves

DON’T “drop in”. Don’t try to catch a wave if another surfer is already riding or taking off closer to the curl or breaking part of the wave.

DO give way. When paddling back out, make sure you do so in a way that doesn’t interfere with someone else’s ride. Go around or behind, not right in front.

DON’T “snake”. When you’ve just caught a good wave, don’t immediately compete with others. Wait your turn.



Emirates offers twice-daily flights to Casablanca from Dubai, from where internal flights can then be caught to Agadir. emirates.com

