

Welcome to Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane

General Information

AUI's Location

Al Akhawayn University (AUI) is located in the resort community of Ifrane, nestled in the Middle Atlas Mountains. Set in the heart of a region known for its beautiful forests, lakes, mountains, and waterfalls, Ifrane provides an excellent backdrop for both intellectual and physical pursuits. Located just 60 kilometers from the historically rich imperial cities of Fes and Meknes, Ifrane is easily accessible by automobile, bus and taxi.



The campus architecture reflects the distinctive building style of Ifrane, mainly mountain chalets with their high-pitched tile roofs and wooden beams. (The steep roofs are designed to move snow) The campus is set on approximately 50 hectares of rolling wooded terrain, with 35 buildings, trails, walkways and open squares. Most of the 1000 students live in residence, and a number of sports and leisure facilities are included on the campus.

Inaugurated officially by His Majesty King Hassan II on 16 January 1995, Al Akhawayn University offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

Research by faculty and students complements the University's program of academic instruction.

AUI is conceived as a Moroccan university, grounded in the historic strengths of African, Arab, and Islamic culture; at the same time, it is modeled in its organizational structure, curriculum, method, and language of instruction on the American system of higher education. AUI is an innovative university of international scope, purpose and influence.

AUI emphasizes extensive faculty-student interaction, small classes, the active involvement of students in formal research activities, careful academic advising, personal counseling, organized student activities, and a full array of student support-services.

Time Zone

Morocco is on GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) year round.

Climate

Ifrane has four distinct seasons. Snow will fall three or four times between November and March, although it can occur much earlier and later. But the cold days will be interspersed with long stretches of relative warmth. Rain, sometimes mixed with snow, is common throughout both fall and spring.

Note: During winter time layered clothing works best. Houses, classrooms and offices are much colder than the North American norm, most of the people wear sweaters and wool scarves. Warm socks, gloves and waterproof boots are highly prized.

Languages

Most people speak the Moroccan dialect of Arabic (Darija), although classical Arabic is the official language of the country. French is the second language and is widely used in commerce and media, but Spanish is more common in the north. There are also three regional Berber languages, one of which (Tamazight) is used in Ifrane and much of the Middle Atlas Mountains.

Note: Because most Moroccans are multilingual, any attempt to speak even a few words of Darija, classical Arabic, French, or Spanish is generally appreciated. Moroccans are very forgiving of linguistic errors so don't be afraid to try.

Currency

The Moroccan dirham is the official currency. Bills come in denominations of 20, 50, 100 and 200 dirhams. Coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5 and 10 dirhams (there are two kinds of 5-dirham coins). Dirhams are divided into 100 centimes; there are 5-, 10-, 20- and 50-centime (half-dirham) coins.

The exchange rate for Moroccan dirhams to the US dollar was 9.41 dirhams to 1 dollar on December 9, 2005. However, the currency has been subject to periodical devaluations.

It is illegal to import or export Moroccan dirhams. Upon leaving Morocco, tourists can reconvert only up to 50 % of the dirhams for which they have exchange slips at the bank at the airport.

Electricity

Electricity in Morocco is the same as in Europe: 220 Volts at 50 cycles. Electrical sockets take 2 round pins like those for France—not the flat ones of the USA. If you have dual voltage equipment, you can buy plugs to convert from flat to round pins at the marché.

Weights and Measures

Morocco uses the metric system. Distance is measured in kilometers. One mile is 1.6 kilometers. Meat, fruit and vegetables are sold in kilograms. There are 2.2 pounds in a kilogram; a half-kilo is about one pound.

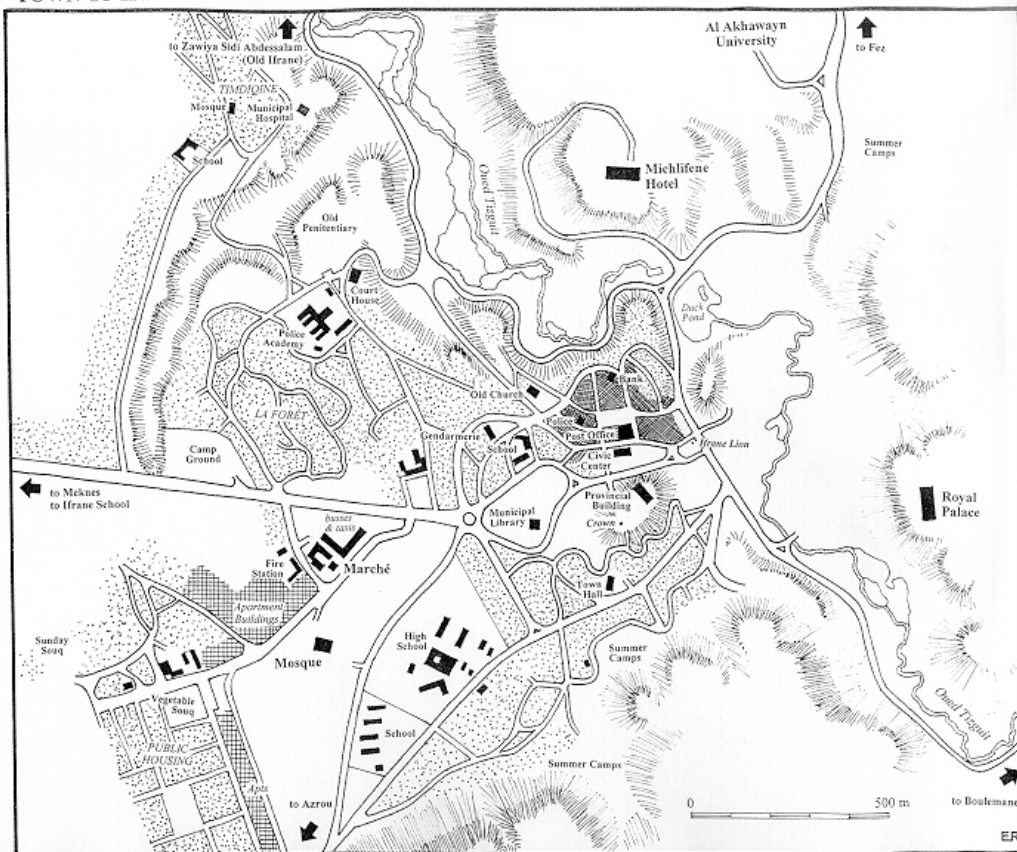
Holidays

Morocco celebrates holidays on both the Gregorian and Hijra (Islamic) calendars, both of which may affect the AUI schedule. Sometimes, university breaks are arranged to coincide with one or more of these events.

Shipping & Receiving

Courier services like DHL, Federal Express, and United Parcel Service do serve Morocco and generally take three to four days, minimum, for delivery, although longer waits are common.

TOWN OF IFRANE



Packages can be shipped by "Poste Rapide" (Express mail) from the Post Office on campus. You must fill in several brief forms for each package and identify the contents. However, these packages may be re-opened for customs inspection.

You may also ship by Poste Rapide from the main Post Office in Meknes, where your package can be inspected by customs before wrapping and sealing.

Local and Regional Attractions:

- • The Vittel Springs (source Vittel): is a good place to walk to. There are waterfalls (cascades) a bit further along the same road.
- Dayet Aoua: is a lake just 18-km from Ifrane. There is a small hotel and restaurant that is sometimes open on the weekends
- Michlifen Ski Resort: Skiing is just 20 min away. Equipment can be rented in town or on site. If you don't ski there are also sleds.
- Cèdre Gouraud: this is the oldest and largest cedar tree in the area, about 14 km from Ifrane (you can get there by car). You can find monkeys on the way if you start out early.
- Ain Aghbal: a private fish farm in Azrou that raises rainbow trout and salmon for various food products including both hot and cold smoked fillets, fish roe as well as fresh fish ready to be cooked
- AUI Students Activities Office and many organizations offer trips and excursions all year round

Restaurants

In addition to the café-restaurants in centre ville and the marché, the following full-service restaurants are located throughout Ifrane. Approximate dinner price, per person, is offered for comparison only.

- • Atlas Restaurant, at the Hotel Perce Neige, near the Hotel de Ville. 150 dhs.
- • Les Tilleuls Restaurant, at the Hotel Tilleuls, in centre ville. 120 dhs.
- • Michlifen Hotel Restaurant, at the Hotel Michlifen. (currently under renovation)
- • Hotel Chamonix, on the corner across from the lion. 120 dhs.
- • Le Grand Hotel, across from the Taj Palace, west of La Paix. 160 dhs set menu.
- • Restaurant La Rose, next to the Mobil station in centre ville. 80 dhs or less.
- • Le Rendezvous des Skieurs, between the Mobil station and La Paix in centre ville. 80 dhs or less.
- • Shell Station, on the route to Azrou. 80 dhs or less.

Transportation

Petits Taxis

There are eleven "petit taxis" operating within Ifrane. All the taxi drivers have cell phones (their names and numbers are listed under Important Phone Numbers). Only Said speaks English, but all drivers speak French. Call **no earlier than 30** minutes or so before you want to leave.

Grands Taxis

"Grand taxis" take passengers from city to city. The Grand Taxi stand in Ifrane is behind the marché. The grand taxis generally wait until they have 6 passengers to go to a city, but you can pay for the whole taxi. It costs about 25 dirhams for one person to go to Fes or to Meknes, so buying all the seats in a grand taxi one-way should cost 150 dirhams. Fix the price before departure. Night time trips to Ifrane can be much more expensive. There are usually grand taxis to Ifrane outside the Amir train station in Meknes. Destinations other than the actual taxi stand cost more, unless it is en route.

If you're coming to Ifrane by Taxi, make sure you start out early enough, because there are fewer taxis going to Ifrane in the evening. Taxi frequency often depends on what time it gets dark.

Note: If you want a bit more room to sit, or you just don't want to wait for a full taxi, you can purchase as many places as you wish. If you buy two places, you will generally be expected to take the choice seats--in front with the driver.

Busses

The national bus company is CTM, although there are many other local and regional busses. The station in Ifrane for all busses is next to the grand taxi area, behind the marché; a bus schedule is posted on a blackboard there, but tickets on busses sometimes have to be booked in advance. They fill up quickly.

In general Buses have more regular schedules. Twice a day, there are buses going to Fez, Meknes, Rabat and Casablanca. From one of these cities you can take train or other transportation to go further. Tickets are inexpensive. A one-way ticket to Rabat is around 60 Dhs

Trains

The nearest train stations are in Fes and Meknes. Schedules may be found at Travel Agents listed below. The Office National des Chemins de Fer (ONCF) also has a website at: <http://www.oncf.ma>

Cars

You could rent a car at the airport or rental agencies in major towns like Casablanca, Fes or Meknes. There's no car rental agency in Ifrane

Banking

The only bank in Ifrane is the Banque Populaire, located in the Résidence de Banque Populaire, one block north of the main intersection in centre ville. The bank is generally open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 to 11:30 and from 14:30 to 16:30 and on Friday from 8:30 to 11:00 and 14:30 to 16:00. Hours change during the summer months and the holy month of Ramadan. There is also an ATM on the outside of the bank. BMCE is in the process of opening a new branch in Ifrane.

Credit cards are not commonly accepted in small establishments and especially in a small town like Ifrane. Cheques are accepted quite widely. You can, however, use MasterCard or Visa credit cards or debit cards in some places such as gas stations, travel agencies, hotels, some large shops, and some restaurants in main cities like Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech, Agadir, Tangier, Fes and Meknes. ATMs throughout Morocco only dispense dirhams. In order to pay with a credit card or cheque, you must show either a passport or your carte de séjour.

Telecommunications

Téléboutiques

You'll quickly notice téléboutiques in every town and city in Morocco. In addition to offering telephone booths where you can make a call, these outlets usually sell telephone cards for public phones, prepaid cards giving access to outside lines for private phones, and cellular phones with their accessories.

In Ifrane, there is a téléboutique affiliated with Croustillant in centre ville; two in the marché; and one in the Maroc Telecom office in centre ville, behind the Post Office.

Cell Phones (Portables)

At present, there are two companies providing cellular phone service: Maroc Telecom and Meditel. Although Maroc Telecom currently has wider coverage, especially in rural areas, both services are available in and around cities and towns.

Note: Making overseas calls on cell phones can be very expensive.

Cell phones (portables) are available at téléboutiques, at the Maroc Telecom office in centre ville, from various vendors at the marché—including a Meditel store. Usually, phones are sold packaged with service from one of these two providers, although it is possible to change provider later.

Service is available by monthly subscription in some cases, but is most often sold by units on cards: You buy a 100-, 200-, or 300-dirham card from a vendor, and then apply that amount to your account through an activation call to your service.

Note: Providers sometimes make special offers to double the units of service for their cards: a 200-dirham card activates 400-dirhams' worth of service. But there may be a time limit (a set number of days or months).

Phone Cards

Many pay phones do not accept coins, but only take pre-paid phone cards that are sold in téléboutiques, the Post Office, and many other places. These cards are sold in a variety of units, the lowest being 12 units for 18 dirhams, which pays for about 10 local calls or 1 very brief international call.

Note: There are several card phones on campus (in the post office, the restaurant, and in the lobby of building 4).

Maroc Telecom sells two types of phone cards under the name "KALIMAT," with instructions in French and Arabic. One has a scratchable code, useable on AUI office telephones to access an outside line. The other is for use in a pay phone, recognizable by its electronic strip.

International Phone Cards

There are many international calling cards—either pre-paid or by subscription, but not all of these will work for calling out from Morocco. The following companies' international phone cards do work, although others may also be able to provide service: AT&T, MCI, Canadian Bell, British Telecom.

Note: Many locations in centre ville and in the marché close from about 12:30 to 15:00, roughly (except during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan). The Banque Populaire, the Post Office, the Police station, and the Hotel de Ville close for lunch during the middle of the day—and these may change from summer to winter. The bakeries, cafés, and restaurants generally stay open through the day, some from 6:30 a.m. on.

Shopping Areas

There are three general locations for shopping and conducting business in Ifrane, depending on what you need.

Note: Small bills (20- and 50-dirham notes) and coins make shopping much easier—and are almost a must at the souk. Since the ATMs only give 100- and 200-dirham notes, you may want to change these at a location in centre ville. A 200-dirham note can cause quite a stir at the souk, and may send vendors in the marché on a search for change!

Center of Ifrane (Centre Ville)

From AUI, it is about one kilometre to the center of Ifrane (centre ville). Most services are located either there or in the market (marché).

The Market (Marché)

The marché, located beyond centre ville about one kilometre along the road to Meknes, houses vendors selling fresh fruit, vegetables, and meat, as well as these other businesses:

- • téléboutique
- • souvenirs
- • groceries (alimentation générale)
- • hardware (droguerie)
- • dry cleaners (nettoyage à sec, or pressing)
- • shoe repair
- • pharmacy
- • hairdresser (coiffure)
- • tailor (tailleur)
- • film processing
- • newsstand

Note: If you ask a vendor for something that isn't available, he may direct you to another shop that does have it, or offer to go and get it for you, or tell you whether you'll have to go to Fes or Meknes for it. So, if you don't see what you're looking for, do ask.

The Souk

The Saturday-Sunday traveling market (souk) is located in Timdeqine, a residential area 2.5 kilometres from the marché, or 1 km from the off-campus

residences in an otherwise empty lot. This is the place to get fresh vegetables in large quantities. The smallest quantity you can buy of most fruits and vegetables is a half kilo (about a pound).

Note: A few vendors at the souk speak French—and even a little English. Some will sell in smaller quantities, especially if you buy several types of items. It pays to become a regular customer!

Bakeries (Boulangeries, Pâtisseries) and Coffee Shops (Cafés)

The following are located in centre ville:

- • Croustillant, café and bakery, on the corner of the main intersection, across from the Mobil Station. Fresh baked breads (Moroccan and French), pastries, candy, fresh eggs and yogurt, coffee, tea, and fruit juices. A teleboutique and internet café is located around the west side.
- • Cookie-Craque, café-restaurant and bakery, one block west of the main intersection. Breads, pastries, ice cream, coffee, tea, fruit juices. Also, a full restaurant menu.
- • La Paix, café-restaurant, one block south and a bit east of Croustillant. Primarily a full-service restaurant, La Paix also sells pastries, pizza, and sandwiches to go.
- • Taj Palace, sandwiches, salads, pizzeria, restaurant, salon de thé. Avenue de la Marche Verte, Hay Riad, Centre ville (back side of the Bowling Center)
- • Diamant Blanc: sandwiches, salads, coffee, tea. It's a few blocks away from the Baladiya, on the south side of a park facing the roundabout.
- • Bread and pastries are also available at many places in the marché, including traditional Moroccan breads, some made on site. There are also many cafés and café-restaurants at the marché, some of which close or change their menu after the busy tourist season.

Groceries (Alimentations Générales)

- • Superette des Cigognes, small supermarket, half a block north of Croustillant. General groceries, with a wider selection of imported or specialty foods. The owners of this grocery, who can be found in the adjacent liquor store, will order items if there is enough demand.
- • Alimentations Générales, small grocery and household stores, at various locations throughout centre ville.
- • There are many small shops in the marché that sell canned foods, household items, and many kinds of other supplies.

Hospitals and Pharmacies

There is a small public hospital in Ifrane and a bigger one in Azrou (17 km from Ifrane)

There are two pharmacies in Ifrane where English is spoken: Pharmacie Les Iris (035567576), located on the far south side of the marché and Pharmacie Michelifen (035567496), in centre ville, across from Croustillant. Another pharmacy is in centre-ville, beside the Taj Palace restaurant. You don't need a prescription to buy medicine. However, you must have a prescription to get refunded for medication

by your insurance company. Other pharmacies: Belyazid (035566415) and Fadila (035567546).

All are open all night. Just call them at the above phone numbers or knock at night even if the lights are off inside

Police

The police station is housed in a building down the hill from centre-ville, on the street heading west from the Taj Palace.

Services Outside Ifrane

Hospitals and Clinics

Note: If you need to go to a hospital in an emergency, you can call the AUI Housing Office emergency number (055 86 28 28 or 055 86 33 33) to get the doctor on duty. S/he will then authorize the use of AUI's ambulance. Alternatively, find your own transportation to one of the private hospitals in Meknes or Fes.

The Clinique Cornet in Meknes is useful in an emergency because Dr. Rava speaks excellent English (055 52 02 62 or 055 52 02 63). Small hospitals in Azrou and Ifrane function more as public clinics than as hospitals, providing the same services available at AUI; they will likely refer you to Meknes or Fes in an emergency.

Pediatricians and gynecologists can be found in both Meknes and Fes, but usually speak only French and Arabic. Ask for referrals from the AUI Infirmary, or for recommendations from colleagues.

Dentists

The following two dentists in Fes have worked with many AUI faculty:

- • Dr. Nouzha Laraqui, US educated with excellent English (055 93 24 93)
- • Dr. Benkirane, excellent but only speaks French and Arabic (055 62 34 74)

The Centre Dentaire Avicenne (022 36 13 24) in Casablanca is a comprehensive dental clinic offering periodontal care.

Travel Agents

Following are some of the travel agents used by AUI faculty:

Fes

First Travel Agency (Hanane)	English, French, Arabic	035 62 12 35
Zalagh Voyages & Tourisme	English, French, Arabic	035 65 20 49
Atlas Voyages	French and Arabic tofes@atlasvoyages.co.ma	035 94 12 12

Meknes

Voyages Oualili	French and Arabic only	035 52 42 14
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Important Phone Numbers

Office	Location	Phone
AUI Security and Safety Department	AUI main gate	035 86 21 65 035 86 22 22
University Infirmary	Building 26	035 86 20 57
AUI Housing Office	Building 26	035 86 20 61 035 86 20 62 035 86 20 63 035 86 20 66
Housing Office Emergencies (after midnight or during the weekend)	Building 26	035 86 28 28 035 86 33 33
Mohamed Akkaoui, Housing Manager	Off-Campus Residences, Building 7	035 86 20 45 067 61 30 17 (cell)
ITS (Information Technology and Systems)	Building 9	035 86 24 04
Library Circulation Desk	Library	035 86 21 70
Task Force (Prevention of Violence & Sexual Harassment)	(no office)	066 22 06 48
National Emergency number	(corresponds to 911 in U.S.)	190
Schools		
SSE	Building 5	035 86 21 14
SHSS	Building 8	035 86 24 27
SBA	Building 11	035 86 23 11 or 035 86 23 13
LC	Building 8	035 86 24 20
CAD	Building 10	035 86 24 30

Les Petits Taxis

1	Radi	066-91-11-05
2	Radi	061-50-28-42
3	Lharass	068-66-61-92
4	Aziz	061-53-17-89
5	Ismail	068-10-23-94
6	Hassan	070-85-25-52
7	N/A	062-04-61-14
8	N/A	073-60-30-78

