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A Few Key Words and Phrases in the Tashelhiyt Language

Introduction

Our excursions are more than just a hike in the mountains. Our goal is to give you the opportunity to interact with Berber life and culture in a direct and firsthand manner. Of course, one of the most important parts of culture is language. In the Atlas mountains south of Marrakech, the predominant language is Tashelhiyt, the largest Berber language by number of speakers. Tashelhiyt is spoken in all of the villages we visit, and knowing a few words of it can endear you to the Berbers you encounter.

That said, please do not feel any pressure to learn these words and phrases — it is completely optional. Most of our customers come and enjoy their time with us without any prior knowledge of the language or culture.

If you only have time to learn a few words, we've marked with a star ★ the most important ones.

Greetings/Goodbyes

English	Tashelhiyt / Arabic	Notes
"Hello" ★	salamoo - alaykoom	This is actually an Arabic greeting used by Muslims throughout the world. It roughly translates to "Peace be upon you." It is said anytime you greet someone new or enter a room where people are present.
"Hello" (reply)	wa alaykoom - salam	This is the reply to the above greeting. It translates as "And upon you, peace."
"How are you?" ★	maminik atgeet?	This is Tashelhiyt. It is part of the greeting process.
"Fine" ★	labass	Used throughout Morocco.
"My name is..."	eesmeeyee...	This is Tashelhiyt.
"Good-bye" ★	bslama	This is Moroccan Arabic, and is generally used throughout Morocco to say good-bye. It literally translates as "with peace."

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Meals/Eating/Drinking

English	Tashelhiyt / Arabic	Notes
"Eat" ★ (imperative command)	eesh!	In Berber culture, it is the host's responsibility to make sure that any guest is well fed. As a result, you will definitely hear your Berber hosts tell you, many times over, "Eesh! Eesh!" Basically, they're telling you "Eat! Eat!"
"Drink!" (imperative command)	soo!	This will probably be heard when you are having tea. Your Berber hosts will encourage you to drink many cups of tea!
"In the name of God" ★	bismillah	This is always said before beginning a meal. It is an Arabic expression that is equivalent to a prayer before meals. If you want to say it before eating, you will really impress your hosts!
"bread"	aghrom	Bread is a staple of every meal except couscous.
"meat"	teefeeyee	Every meal includes some meat (usually beef or chicken) in the centre of the dish. It is usually eaten last, after the vegetables.
"tea" ★	atay	This is the word for tea all throughout Morocco.
"water"	aman	You probably won't need to ask for this, as you will be drinking bottled water.
"Thanks be to God!" ★	hamdoolah	This Arabic expression is said at the end of the meal when you are full.

Other Important Words or Phrases

English	Tashelhiyt / Arabic	Notes
"I want..."	reekh	A little difficult to pronounce the final sound.
"Thank you." ★	shookran	Used throughout Morocco.
"house"	tigme	An important word for Berbers!
"good/beautiful" ★	eefoolkee	Can be used for food/meals and just about everything else...from people to the country of Morocco.