

The Muslim West | Mosques: A Place for Prayer

The prayer room

Mosques are not temples or 'houses of God', and no liturgical acts are performed in them. They are a place for prayer and meditation, and a meeting place. Believers come to the mosque to perform their ritual, mandatory prayers with others, although private prayer is also practised. Believers face the qibla when praying, bowing when necessary and reciting verses from the Qur'an. Mosques are also centres for training and learning. In the weekly sermon given during Friday prayers, the imam discusses a specific religious theme recited from the minbar (pulpit) and, outside prayer times, the learned can give conferences on theological or scientific topics.



Name:
Almohad Mosque of the Kasbah

Dynasty:
Hegira 633 / AD 1235 Hafsid

Details:
Tunis, Tunisia

Justification:
Despite its simplicity, the prayer room offers some degree of comfort, furnished with esparto mats, rugs and lamps, which faintly illuminate the room. The prayer-room furniture typically includes two important components: the minbar from which the imam delivers Friday prayers, and the case in which the Qur'an is kept.



Name:
Lamp

Dynasty:
Hegira 705 / AD 1305 Nasrid

Details:
National Archaeological Museum
Madrid, Spain

Justification:
Despite its simplicity, the prayer room offers some degree of comfort, furnished with esparto mats, rugs and lamps, which faintly illuminate the room. The prayer-room furniture typically includes two important components: the minbar from which the imam delivers Friday prayers, and the case in which the Qur'an is kept.



Name:
Great lantern of al-Mu'izz

Dynasty:
Hegira 424–43 / AD 1032–51 Fatimid–Zirid

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
Despite its simplicity, the prayer room offers some degree of comfort, furnished with esparto mats, rugs and lamps, which faintly illuminate the room. The prayer-room furniture typically includes two important components: the minbar from which the imam delivers Friday prayers, and the case in which the Qur'an is kept.

**Name:**

Minbar

Dynasty:

Hegira 532 / AD 1137 (commenced) Almoravid

Details:

Badi Palace
Marrakesh, Morocco

Justification:

Despite its simplicity, the prayer room offers some degree of comfort, furnished with esparto mats, rugs and lamps, which faintly illuminate the room. The prayer-room furniture typically includes two important components: the minbar from which the imam delivers Friday prayers, and the case in which the Qur'an is kept.

**Name:**

Prayer pulpit (minbar)

Dynasty:

Hegira 490 / AD 1097 Almoravid

Details:

National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts
Algiers, Algeria

Justification:

Despite its simplicity, the prayer room offers some degree of comfort, furnished with esparto mats, rugs and lamps, which faintly illuminate the room. The prayer-room furniture typically includes two important components: the minbar from which the imam delivers Friday prayers, and the case in which the Qur'an is kept.

**Name:**

Maghrebi rab'a

Dynasty:

Hegira 745 / AD 1344 Marinid

Details:

Islamic Museum, al-Aqsa Mosque / al-Haram al-Sharif
Jerusalem

Justification:

Despite its simplicity, the prayer room offers some degree of comfort, furnished with esparto mats, rugs and lamps, which faintly illuminate the room. The prayer-room furniture typically includes two important components: the minbar from which the imam delivers Friday prayers, and the case in which the Qur'an is kept.
