

# Water | Water Usage: Drinking and Washing

‘A water canteen was one of the few possessions commonly carried by most pilgrims.’

Washing and drinking are essential for most living things. For Muslims it is a requirement of the faith that they carry out ritual ablutions before prayer. As a result, basins are provided at mosques, and some of these are decorated with vegetal ornament and inscriptions. Similarly, for pilgrims to remain hydrated during their long voyages, a personal water canteen, made of pottery, was one of the few possessions commonly carried by most pilgrims.



**Name:**

Midhat al-Sultan (ablutions room)

**Dynasty:**

Begun in hegira 852 / AD 1448, finished in 854 / 1450 Hafsid

**Details:**

Tunis, Tunisia

**Justification:**

The Midhat al-Sultan is an ablutions hall in Tunis that is constructed around a central courtyard and fountain. Within the arch of each wall, fountains empty into small basins in which the faithful could wash before praying in the mosque.



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**Justification:**

Midhat al-Sultan, view of interior with the marble fountain in the centre.



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**Details:**

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**Justification:**

Midhat al-Sultan, view of arched walkway.



**Name:**

Basin

**Dynasty:**

About hegira 676 / AD 1277–8 Ayyubid

**Details:**

Victoria and Albert Museum  
London, England, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

Inscribed with the name and titles of a 7th- / 13th-century Ayyubid governor, this basin was probably used by him for ablutions before prayers.

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**Name:**  
Ablutions basin

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 381–98 / AD 991–1008 (when 'Abd al-Malik served as hajib) Umayyad Caliphate of Córdoba; reign of Hisham II (AH 366–99 / AD976–1009)

**Details:**  
Dar Si Saïd Museum  
Marrakesh, Morocco

**Justification:**  
Found at a 9th- / 15th-century madrasa in Marrakesh, this marble basin was produced in Cordoba, Spain. It was probably used for ablutions before prayers.

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**Name:**  
Pilgrim bottle

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 7th century / AD 13th century Ayyubid / early Mamluk

**Details:**  
Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities (Medelhavsmuseet)  
Stockholm, Sweden

**Justification:**  
The globular shape and the two loops around the neck for easy hanging from a belt or saddle, make this a convenient and portable water container.



**Name:**  
Pilgrim's flask

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 8th century / AD 14th century Mamluk

**Details:**  
National Museum of Aleppo, Islamic Department  
Aleppo, Syria

**Justification:**  
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