

high atlas summit trek, q&a



how big is the group?

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 12 people in order to run and a maximum of approximately 25 people due to the wilderness environment in which the expedition is taking place.

who do we fly with?

You will be flying with Royal Air Maroc from London to Marrakech via Casablanca and returning from Marrakech to London via Casablanca. The flight will take approx. 4 hrs. Your flight tickets will be issued to you at the airport.

what's the luggage allowance?

As no formal clothes are needed, luggage should be kept to the absolute minimum - details on what to pack are provided in your kit list. Your rucksack/holdall (suitcases are not appropriate) must not exceed 15kgs in weight. On your outward journey, please wear your trekking gear, hiking boots, and carry a spare change of clothing in your hand luggage.

what will the accommodation be like?

You will be staying in a mountain lodge in cosy, unisex dormitories. At the very beginning and end of the trek, you will be staying in moderate style hotels in order to relax and recover. If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with, please let Charity Challenge know in advance.

do we need to take our own sleeping bags and mats?

Yes, you will need to bring a warm sleeping bag (three to four season). The refuge provides mattresses.

what are the toilet/washing facilities like?

The refuge has unisex Berber style toilets and washing facilities with showers.

will my valuables be safe?

While we will do everything to provide adequate safety for the group and security for your possessions, the general rule is that if you don't need it, don't bring it. This includes jewellery, necklaces, rings and even watches. Your passport and money should be kept on you at all times.

what is the food and drink like?

Each morning you will be provided with a very filling breakfast of hot sweet Moroccan coffee, hot chocolate and bread and cheeses. Lunch will be a packed lunch and for dinner it will vary between western style food and Moroccan national fare. Food will always be ample and will provide heaps of energy. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies.

who will be leading the group?

We employ a number of first aid qualified expedition leaders, all of whom speak English to varying degrees. They will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

what is a typical day?

You will be woken up early each morning at approx. 6am, and given a basic but hearty breakfast. After breakfast you will begin the first climb of the day 3-4 hours. A long and early lunch will be taken to avoid trekking during the hottest part of the day; it will consist of bread, salad fruit & fish or eggs etc. We set off to walk again for another 3-4 hours and then we return to the refuge late afternoon for dinner and a well-deserved rest.

how fit do I need to be?

Training and fitness is definitely required, as this expedition is graded as "Tough". Anyone who leads a fairly active and moderately healthy lifestyle should be OK as long as they train regularly over a period of at least three months leading up to the expedition. Don't forget that the temperature and the altitudes are different from the UK and that you will be exercising constantly for a number of days. While strength is important, endurance training should be your primary focus. Walking up hills and climbing stairs are both ways to condition your lower body. Begin slowly, without the weight of a pack, eventually adding weight as you increase your training pace. Take a long hike (5-6 hours) several times with a weighted pack, up and down hills or on small mountains (weight your pack with water containers and pour out the water before your descent to minimise knee stress). Supplement this activity with running, cycling, or swimming, for additional aerobic conditioning. Also see the Fitness Training Advice notes.

what happens if I fall ill, can't keep up or there is an emergency?

Back up support will never be far away and can be brought in, in the event of an emergency. The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's walking ability, which is catered for. There will always be a staff member at the back of the group to ensure you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace.

what is included in the cost of the expedition?

The following items are included in the expedition: international flights to and from Morocco, all meals and drinking water on the trek, unless otherwise stated in the itinerary, all transfers in Morocco, all accommodation whether in the refuge or hotel, English speaking expedition leader and full local support team, a US\$20 donation to a local community project, a Charity Challenge TShirt and discount from Nomad Travellers Stores for personal equipment. We also make a contribution through Climate Care to offset the equivalent CO2 emissions of your international flight.

what is not included in the cost of the expedition?

The following items are not included in your expedition and will be at your own expense: tips, activities not mentioned in the itinerary, personal spending money, travel to and from UK airports and any required vaccinations.

what shall I do about spending money?

You will not need large amounts of money during this trip and other than at the start and end of the trip, you will be in the mountains away from any foreign exchanges or banks. We recommend that you take sufficient amounts of cash in small denominations or use your ATM card with the pin number to withdraw money. Credit cards should be accepted in the hotels.

how much would you recommend for tips?

Tipping is of course discretionary, however, we recommend approx. £15 per person at the end of the event, which you should give to the tour leader who will then divide it among all of the support team.

what is the weather likely to be like?

Early mornings will immediately warm as soon as the sun rises, and the days will be warm and bright. As soon as the sun sets, the temperature drops radically and is often well below zero degrees. Towards the top of the mountain, you will be trekking above the clouds and will need strong UV protection. Departures in October are much colder as you summit and warm kit should be taken.

what do you do to protect the environment?

We are keeping to a small group so that we limit the impact we have on the surrounding environment. We will ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly. We follow the local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect. We will also be donating US\$20 per participant towards a local community project, which you will be informed about after your expedition (educational, health or environmental) to enhance local living conditions.

can you recommend any literature about the region?

- ? Peter Mayne's highly readable *A Year in Marrakech* is his account of time spent living among the people of the city and observations on their lives.
- ? *Their Heads Are Green* is an intriguing collection of short stories about North Africa by the famous Tangier resident Paul Bowles.
- ? Leonora Peet's *Women of Marrakech* – A fascinating look at the lives of Moroccan women.
- ? Morocco – *Lonely Planet*.
- ? *The Rough Guide to Morocco*
- ? *The House of Si Abdallah*: the oral history of a Moroccan family, by Henry Munson Jr, is a unique insight into the daily life and thoughts of Moroccans, mainly through the eyes of a traditional peddler in Tangier.

english

Hello
Goodbye
Good morning
Good evening
Good night
Please
Thank you
How are you?
Excuse me
Sorry!
What is your name?
My name is
I don't understand
Yes
No
No problem
How much?
When?
What is the time?
Zero
One
Two
Three
Four
Five
Six
Seven
Eight
Nine
Ten

french

Bonjour
Au revoir
Bonjour
Bonsoir
Bonne nuit
S'il vous plaît
Merci
Comment allez vous ?
Je m'excuse
Excusez moi
Comment vous appelez
Je m'appelle
Je ne comprends pas
Oui
Non
Pas de problème
Combien?
Quand?
Quelle heure est il?
Zéro
Un
Deux
Trois
Quatre
Cinq
Six
Sept
Huit
Neuf
Dix

NB: The information provided above was correct at the time of going to print.