



TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

ATLAS MOUNTAIN BIKE
CHALLENGE
MOROCCO

Sat 07 Jun - Sat 14 Jun 2014





In aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity

07 Jun - 14 Jun 2014



8 DAYS | MOROCCO | TOUGH

Morocco's High Atlas Mountains offer a unique and spectacular setting for this mountain challenge. Beginning in bustling Marrakech, the route travels 200kms over dirt roads and steep inclines into the heart of this remote and culturally detached region. The challenge takes place in amid the central peaks of Mgoun Massif, home to the Berber people who will be our hosts for this challenge. Six days of cycling will be completed with a smooth downhill towards the dramatic Cathedrale Cliffs.

- Pedal over 200kms through the dramatic Atlas Mountains
- Take on impressive peaks and treacherous mountain passes
- Sleep under the star-studded North African sky
- Explore the sights and sounds of vibrant Marrakech
- Visit the remote homeland of Berber tribes people

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 Sat 07 Jun

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Day 1: International departure from London

Our journey begins at the airport where we'll meet teammates and the Charity Challenge representative. Last minute nerves will morph into excitement as we touch down in Marrakech, a magical city of snake charmers, fascinating architecture and bustling markets. Our guide will brief us about the challenge ahead at our hotel, before we head out for our first team dinner together.

DAY 2 Sun 08 Jun

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Day 2: Drive to Demnate, then cycle to Tilsekhte, 1,565m (approximately 21kms)

The landscape quickly changes on the first day as we head towards Demnate, nestled at the foot of the Atlas Mountains. There's no turning back as we pedal into the mountains, towards the natural arch of Ini Nifri. After lunch, it's back in the saddle for a steady climb up the mountain path. Team spirit will inspire us to push through to camp, where a sumptuous feast awaits.

DAY 3 Mon 09 Jun

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Day 3: Tilsekhte to Tirghist via the Tizi n'Tirghist Pass, 2,293m (approximately 30kms)

Think of the dazzling view at the top as you battle your way up the steady ascent to the first pass. From here it's an exhilarating downhill ride past tiny mountain villages. The terrain becomes trickier as the ride passes through a small gorge and up to Tizi n'Tirghist (2,626m). Exhausted but energised by the ride through the Ait Bpou Goumez Valley, enjoy the thrilling descent into camp.

DAY 4 Tue 10 Jun

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Day 4: Cycle through the Ait Bou Goumez Valley, 1,880m (approximately 45km)

Expect today to be tough. The easy downhill will lull you into a false sense of security, before the hard ascent through fields and Berber villages. After lunch, it's time to dig deep for a huge 830m climb on dirt tracks to the foothills of the Mgoun Massif. This will be our first night in a traditional auberge, complete with Berber hospitality.

DAY 5 Wed 11 Jun

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Day 5: Ait Bou Goumez to Amezrai, 1,650m (approximately 68km)

Today is the longest and toughest day of the challenge – but also the most magnificent. Once again, we will tackle the 13km ascent up to the Tizi n'Tirghist pass. From here we freewheel down 300m, taking in the mountain vistas before beginning another ascent to the Tizi n'Ilissi pass at 2,530m. Finally, a 1,000m downhill slope leads us into the village of Amerzai.

DAY 6 Thu 12 Jun

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Day 6: Amezrai to La Cathédrale, 1,150m (approximately 47km)

The final day of the challenge follows the course of the Ahançal Valley, passing farms and Berber villages. Expect a hard ride out of the valley onto a dirt road through dense pine forests. Our efforts will be well worth it as the night will be spent in the shadows of the imposing cliffs of the Cathédrale, besides the sparkling Ahançal River.

DAY 7 *Fri 13 Jun*

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Day 7: Drive back to Marrakech via Lake Bin el Ouidane

Feeling triumphant, we had back to Marrakech via Morocco's largest reservoir, the carp-filled Lake Bin el Ouidane. Heading on from here, we arrive in Marrakech in the early afternoon. Share a drink or two with new-found friends and trekking partners in our final team dinner. Overnight in hotel.

DAY 8 *Sat 14 Jun*

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Day 8: Return to UK

Before heading home, there's some free time to explore the city and partake in some last minute souvenir shopping in the frenzied souks of Marrakech. Eventually, however, it's time to head to the airport for our flight home to London.

NB

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, wildlife movements, the strength of the group and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary; however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that may occur. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say.

HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.
The costs below are per person.

MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £195.00 when you book
Raise a minimum of £1995.00 for your charity.

FLEXI

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Registration fee of £195.00 when you book
Then £195.00 towards challenge costs
(8 weeks before your challenge)
Raise a minimum of £1595.00 for your charity.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Public liability insurance
- Discount on personal equipment from The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor and Nomad Travel Stores
- Access to "ask the expert" re your kit requirements
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- Warm up exercise routines
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule
- Fitness training notes
- Sponsorship forms (online and hard copy)
- Template press release
- A-Z of fundraising ideas
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, fact file, Q&As, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Fundraising advice

On your challenge

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- International flights to and from the UK (including all known UK air taxes, and fuel surcharges, at the time of costing)
- Internal road and air transfers as per the itinerary
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Drinking water on challenge days
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- All ground staff including English speaking guide, drivers, cooks, and porters
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- Activity equipment such as bikes, tents and rafts as per the challenge activity
- A donation to a community project in one of the countries in which we operate
- A contribution towards funding the reduction of carbon emissions through Climate Care's portfolio of award winning projects
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt
- All challenge management before, during and post event

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

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On your challenge

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- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)
- Travel Insurance (you can buy at time of booking or in your Account Area, or provide your own policy details)
- Clothing and equipment listed on your Kit List
- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)
- Personal spending money
- Any other specific items listed as not included in your Trip Notes

THE DETAILS

Fundraising deadlines

You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 10 weeks before departure (by 29/03/2014), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 12/07/2014). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.

Prices include all known air taxes

We include ALL known air taxes (including fuel) at the time of costing. Many companies do not include air taxes at all, and clients are therefore hit with a surcharge of three or four hundreds of pounds just before departure. Our aim is to provide you with transparent pricing and clear instructions as to what is included in our prices and if applicable what isn't.

Typical group size

The typical group size is 16 - 30 participants

Small group supplement

The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 16 participants. We can run this trip with 10-15 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £50. This is payable by your charity if you book under the Minimum Sponsorship or Flexi options, and by yourself if you choose the Self Funder option. We will notify you 12 weeks before departure if this is necessary.

Optional extras

Business class upgrades*
Travel insurance
Single room supplements*
Extensions at end of trip*
Trek/bike training weekends*
(*subject to availability)

Travel insurance

Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenge is our main concern, which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy, which covers you for the adventurous nature of your challenge, the activities you are undertaking, and the altitudes. We have chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine, who offer cover for an extensive number of adventurous activities. Cover is available directly from Campbell Irvine for most European residents and includes cover for emergency medical and repatriation and for your cancellation or curtailment of the challenge. Full details including costs may be found at <http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/charitychallenge>.

Level of Difficulty

The High Atlas Mountain Bike Challenge is graded as tough, and as such it is suitable for participants who have previously done some long distance cycling but who want to get out of their comfort zone, and challenge themselves to a higher level. A good level of training is strongly advised to take part in this challenge.

During your Atlas Mountain Bike challenge you will be:

- Cycling through the Mid-High Atlas mountain range.
- Cycling mainly off road on dirt tracks. There are sections that are on tarmac and some that are on single track roads.
- Taking on many tough, solid ascents on poor quality roads. You will also enjoy the hard downhills!
- Cycling up to an altitude of 2600 meters, through remote areas.
- Cycling for up to 68 km per day.

Money

Currency: The national currency is the Dirham, which is divided into 100 centimes.

For up to date currency exchange, go to www.xe.com.

Currency regulations: The Dirham is officially designated as a closed currency meaning it can only be traded within Morocco; however, Dirhams are being sold and bought in travel agencies and at major airports in several countries (notably the UK). The import and export of the currency is tolerated up to a limit of 1000DH. Currency purchased during a visit to Morocco should be converted back before departing the country, with the exception of the 1000DH level.

ATMs: There are ATMs available at the airport near to the hotel in Marrakech. This is the best source of obtaining currency whilst you are in Morocco.

Credit cards: Although you should bring one in case of emergencies, we do not recommend you rely on a credit card in the rural area of your challenge.

How much to bring: You will not need a large amount of money during this trip as most expenses are covered. However, approximately £200 is recommended for gifts, souvenirs, alcohol & tipping. Euros and US\$ can all be exchanged on arrival (GBP are much harder to change).

Tipping: Tipping is personal and at your sole discretion. You should only tip if you feel that you have received good service. We recommend approx. £5/US\$8 per person per challenge day and this should be given to the challenge leader at the end of the challenge who will distribute it evenly among the support team.

Visa

For UK passport holders a full passport is required but no visa. You must have at least six months to run on your passport from the end of the challenge. Ensure your passport is stamped on arrival. Non UK passport holders should consult their nearest Moroccan embassy regarding visa requirements.

Vaccinations

For up to date vaccination information please check the NHS travel website Fit for Travel at: <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations.aspx>. Although the Charity Challenge team are travel professionals, they are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your GP or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements.

Flights

You will be flying from London to Marrakech and returning via the same route. The flight will take approx. 3 1/2 hrs. Your flight tickets will be issued to you at the airport. If you choose to book your own flights you must confirm with the Charity Challenge office before paying otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact flights@charitychallenge.com for further assistance).

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have a suitable travel insurance policy whilst participating on the challenge. We have a special policy which covers among other things, medical (emergency, evacuation and repatriation) arrangements, cancellation and curtailment of the challenge, and more specifically for the adventurous activities undertaken on this challenge. If you have your own travel insurance policy, you must ensure that it provides at least the same level of cover as our recommended policy, including protecting the charity in the event of your cancellation 56 days or less prior to departure. If you choose not to purchase our recommended policy when you book we will send you a disclaimer which you should complete and return.

For more general travel insurance questions, please refer to our main [FAQs page](#).

Group Size

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 16 people in order to run and a maximum of approximately 30 people due to the wilderness environment in which the challenge takes place. We will be able to run this challenge for 10 to 15 people by charging a small group supplement of £50 which will be added to your final balance invoice (self funders) or charged to your charity (minimum sponsorship or flexi).

Leadership

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

What are the bikes like?

The mountain bikes that we use are some of the best available in Morocco, although you should not expect them to be as high-spec as some that are now available in the UK. Sizes range from 15 - 21" and come equipped with off-

road tyres and multi-use pedals. Some (but not all) have disc brakes and all come with bells and water holders. It is not possible to fit your own pedals, but you may bring your own saddle if you wish. We have plenty of spares and our helpful mechanics are on hand at all times to help with repairs or adjustments.

Climate

Early mornings will immediately warm as soon as the sun rises, and the days will be hot and bright. As soon as the sun sets, the temperature drops radically and is often well below zero degrees. It is good practice to always pack for all weathers, but in general your challenge should be hot and dry, with cold evenings.

Terrain

The trip starts on a well maintained dirt track in the mountains before it gets slightly narrow on the second day with mainly uphill sections. Occasionally single tracks are involved with even stony sections for some kilometers. However there is a big mixture of tarmac road on good dirt road on others, with one iconic day of cycling on a flat single trail through the valley of Ait Bougumez in the middle of the fields.

Luggage allowance and valuables

Try to keep luggage to an absolute minimum – details of what to pack are provided in your kit list. Your rucksack/holdall (suitcases are not appropriate) must not exceed the maximum weight limit of the airline you are flying with (usually 20kg, however do check this with the airline or contact our flights team if in doubt). Each day when you begin to ride, your personal kit will be transported to the next hotel. You will only need to have a handle bar bag or bum bag with you during the day and you will be able to access your day pack at rest stops.

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.

Responsible Tourism

At Charity Challenge we are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism, and work closely with bodies such as the International Porter Protection Group and Climate Care to ensure that our challenges benefit the local environments and communities in which they take place. We ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly, and following local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect, we aim to limit our impact on the natural environment. In addition to taking these practical steps to ensure that our challenges are sustainable, we also make a contribution each year to a number of local community projects, so as to give something back directly to the communities that we visit. Since 2000 we have donated almost £200,000 to such projects, supporting a range of initiatives, including schooling for children in Africa, shelter for street children in Brazil, and Orang-utan conservation in Indonesia. We recommend that any gifts brought over for children are given to the UK challenge leader and distributed where needed by them and our local Ground Agent. If you wish to do more, you should consider buying drinks, postcards and souvenirs from the local vendors. For many, it is their sole source of income. For more information, please visit our [Responsible Tourism](#) pages, where you will be able to view a list of the projects that we currently support.

Typical day

You will wake early (around sunrise), in time for a hearty breakfast. Cycling days will last between 4-8 hours, including breaks and snacks. You will have a leisurely, longer break for lunch around noon (picnic or cooked lunches will be provided). You will arrive at your accommodation each day before sunset. Most of the challenge takes place on dirt roads, with the occasional tarmac road.

Accommodation

During the challenge you will be staying mainly in tents and village houses, with shared toilets/shower facilities. You will be in a centrally located hotel in Marrakech. Please let Charity Challenge know if you are travelling with a friend or relative who you wish to share with, if not you will be roomed with someone of the same sex.

If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with please ensure that you note this where appropriate when booking or email challenges@charitychallenge.com.

Food & Drink

You will be served a variety of Moroccan food. All meals are healthy and nourishing. Lunches will be either in the form of light snacks suitable for biking, or picnics. There will be plenty of food to satisfy hungry appetites, but please let Charity Challenge know if you have any specific dietary requirements.

NB. You will only be expected to carry water & any essentials you would carry on a day ride – our support team will take care of the rest of your luggage.

Clothing and equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For your cycle challenge, padded cycling shorts and comfortable footwear are essential, and helmets are compulsory throughout. Training with your cycling shorts is definitely advised! You can bring equipment like clip-in pedals or a gel seat, if desired, in order to adapt your bike in country, and we would also recommend technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. A full kit list for this challenge can be found [here](#) and once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire and Cotswold Outdoor.

Toilets

During the challenge you will be staying mainly in tents and village houses, with shared toilets/shower facilities. You will be in a centrally located hotel in Marrakech with western style toilets.

Phone and WiFi

WIFI and mobile phone reception will be available at the hotel in Marrakech. After leaving Marrakech, the mobile phone and WIFI signal will be limited.

Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of its participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. In a nutshell, Our Challenge Safe brand ([link to Challenge Safe page on new website](#)) formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the activity itself. Your welfare is paramount!

In terms of your High Atlas Mountain Bike Challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- You will be going to high altitude. The maximum altitude reached during this challenge will be 2600 meters.
- The Mid-High Atlas Mountains could be very challenging in terms of terrain and remoteness. The camping facilities are very basic. You will spend one night in a local house.
- You will take on some steep descents on tough terrain, which will require a lot of concentration
- The local team are very good at trying to accommodate different dietary requirements. However, a vegan and gluten free diet will be difficult to cater for. If you have any dietary requirements, please let us know and we will try our best to accommodate your request. Please make sure you bring some extra snacks and products that you are used to eating.

Emergencies

Full back-up support (by 4WD vehicles) will be close by and can be brought in should there be an emergency, or if you need to stop for any reason. The challenge is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's cycling abilities. There will be a staff member at the back of the group at all times to ensure that no one is left behind and can take things at your own pace.

Training

Training and fitness is definitely required. It is important that you work specifically on your stamina, leg and joint strength, core and balance in order to get as much out of the challenge as possible. You will be cycling everyday on varied terrain so get out on your bike as often as you can! You need to be able to sustain around 7-8 hours of cycling for 5 continuous days, so if you can then replicating this over a weekend would be fantastic training. In your Charity Challenge account you will find more comprehensive Fitness Training Notes. You can also look to join one of our [training weekends](#).

Challenge Training

If you would like to get a feel for our challenges ahead of your departure, why not consider booking on a 1 or 2 day UK Challenge?

We have a variety of challenges, covering all levels of difficulty, taking place in stunning National Parks across the UK that are led by highly qualified and experienced expedition and mountain leaders. These challenges will give

you the perfect opportunity to monitor fitness levels, test out your kit, meet people in the great outdoors, share fundraising stories and gain valuable advice and support for the challenge ahead. We encourage participants to make use of our highly knowledgeable leaders and ask them any questions you may have about clothing and equipment, expedition health and wellbeing, trekking skills, walking techniques and teamwork!

We are offering all participants **50% off** the registration fee when you book on one of the UK challenges listed via the link below. Just use the code **TRAINING** when booking. T&C's – you must have an active booking on a challenge to avail of this offer. Discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Find out more [here](#)

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Any more questions?

Contact us:

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www.charitychallenge.com

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