

CH>RITY  
CH>LLENGE



TRIP NOTES

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# BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

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MADAGASCAR TREK  
MADAGASCAR

Wed 12 May - Sun 23 May 2021





## In aid of your choice of charity

12 May - 23 May 2021

### 12 DAYS | MADAGASCAR | TOUGH

Following in the footsteps of famed British explorer Ash Dykes, who walked the entire length of this captivating country and designed this itinerary to reflect his expedition, expect a real challenge right in the heart of Madagascar.

Cut adrift amongst the glittering waters of the Indian Ocean, Madagascar is a land rich in colour and contrasts. A magical island home to a remarkable collection of rare flora and fauna, and a cultural pedigree that encompasses a complex mix of beliefs and rituals, your time on Madagascar will be spent trekking through amazing landscapes of mountains and massifs, summiting the impressive Pic Imarivolanitra, while meeting friendly local folk along the way.

- Explore the untouched and intriguing Madagascar massif
- Discover the rare and staggering beauty of this island gem
- Follow the footsteps of famed British explorer Ash Dykes
- Trek amongst the unique landscapes of Andringitra National Park
- Climb to the summit of Pic Imarivolanitra

## YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

### DAY 1 Wed 12 May

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#### International departure from London

Meeting the rest of the team at the airport today the excitement builds as you begin the long anticipated journey with an overnight flight to the capital of Madagascar, Antananarivo.

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### DAY 2 Thu 13 May

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#### Arrive in Antananarivo

Arriving at Ivato Airport in the late afternoon, you will be transferred on to your accommodation to rest up from the long flight and prepare yourselves for the challenge ahead. (D)

Accommodation: Hotel

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### DAY 3 Fri 14 May

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#### Travel to Fianarantsoa

And so the adventure begins. Departing Antananarivo early in the morning, your journey takes you south, across the incredible landscapes of the Hauts Plateaux and on towards Ambositra, Madagascar's un-disputed arts and crafts centre.

The first stop is Ambositra, which lies in the heart of a picturesque valley of rice fields and mountains, providing a welcome break from the long journey. From here we drive to Fianarantsoa, Madagascar's second city and the final destination for the day. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel

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### DAY 4 Sat 15 May

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#### Trek to Tsitongabalala (approx. 5-6hrs)

Transferring from Fianarantsoa to the start of the trek this morning, you head towards the granite outcrops of the towering Andringitra Mountains.

Occupying the deep valleys and ridges of Madagascar's southern central region, these remote landscapes make up one of the most biologically diverse regions in the country; home to over 100 species of birds and 50 species of mammals including no fewer than 13 different types of lemurs.

Work your way through the valley towards the Zomandao River Gorge, before setting up your first night's camp near the river's edge. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camping

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### DAY 5 Sun 16 May

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**Trek to Andrianalika (approx. 5-6hrs)**

Follow the course of the Zomandao River this morning; you'll negotiate a trail of rocks and boulders, before arriving at a point where the valley opens up to reveal a rural scene scattered with flourishing rice fields and traditional Malagasy farms. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camping

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**DAY 6** *Mon 17 May*

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**Trek to Iatranomby (approx. 5-6hrs)**

The third day in the gorge sees us continuing through this remarkable setting, before eventually stopping at the base of the spectacular Andrianalika Waterfall, where the group will camp overnight. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camping

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**DAY 7** *Tue 18 May*

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**Trekking into Andringitra National Park (approx. 5-6hrs)**

Entering the Andringitra National Park, you'll journey through a landscape that until the early 1990s was little known to outsiders. Home to the second highest peak in the country, its rich mix of mountain forests and dense rainforest is a trekker's paradise, set against the spectacular backdrop of towering granite mountains.

Part of the longest unbroken chain of rainforest left in Madagascar, the park provides you with your base camp for tomorrow's summit climb, nestling on top of the sacred waterfalls of Riandavy et Riambavy. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camping

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**DAY 8** *Wed 19 May*

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**Summit of Pic Imarivolanitra (approx. 5-6hrs)**

A long hard day begins early this morning as you take on the ultimate focus of your challenge, the climb to the summit of the 2658m Pic Imarivolanitra (Pic Boby). The highest non-technical climb on Madagascar, the trail to the summit is steep and rocky, taking you across a challenging terrain of granite slabs and boulder strewn trails.

The climb to the summit is roughly 2-3 hours and from the top the views out across the mountains and towards the Indian Ocean can be breathtaking. After a chance to revel in the vistas and enjoy the success of the climb, you'll begin the descent down towards Iatranomby, crossing some impressive boulder fields as you make our way down to camp. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camping

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**DAY 9** *Thu 20 May*

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**Trek to Tsarasoa**

The journey down continues today, eventually bringing you to the park exit and the beautiful setting of the Tsaranoro

Valley. Dominated by the spectacular granite walls of the Tsaranoro Massif, the valley is blanketed in open savannahs and tropical forest that provided a haven for ring-tailed lemurs, falcons and an abundance of orchids.

Finishing the day at the Tsarasoa Lodge, the evening provides an opportunity to commemorate a job well done with a celebratory meal and a few well-earned drinks. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Lodge

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#### **DAY 10** *Fri 21 May*

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##### **Travel to Antsirabe**

Our final day on the Island sees you heading for Antsirabe, Madagascar's third largest city. At one time this once chic colonial hideaway was filled with French villas and broad, leafy avenues.

Today its colonial grandeur has faded somewhat, but it still retains a certain charm and provides an interesting and decidedly temperate setting in which to end our adventures. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel

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#### **DAY 11** *Sat 22 May*

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##### **Depart Madagascar for the UK**

After a final breakfast, you'll start the journey towards Antananarivo where a late evening flight will take you back to London, bidding a fond farewell to the beautiful island of Madagascar. Filled with a profound sense of achievement and a wish that the adventure could continue, you return home armed with stories and memories that will last a lifetime. (B)

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#### **DAY 12** *Sun 23 May*

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##### **Arrive Home**

Saying goodbye will not be easy, but the memories you've made together will stay with you forever.

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#### **NB**

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

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 might 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.

### SELF FUNDER

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Pay a registration fee of £495.00 when you book

Then a balance of £2399.00 (10 weeks before your challenge)

Raise as much as you can for your charity.

### MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £495.00 when you book

Raise a minimum of £4895.00 for your charity.

### FLEXI

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Registration fee of £495.00 when you book

Then £495.00 towards challenge costs (10 weeks before your challenge)

Raise a minimum of £3885.00 for your charity.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

### Before you go

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- Sponsorship forms
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, visa information, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Members only benefits and discounts at a wide range of clothing and equipment suppliers including Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor, Runners Needs, Snow + Rock, Water to Go, The Altitude Centre, Sporttape and Nomad & MASTA.
- Warm up exercise routines
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Public liability insurance
- Fundraising advice
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- Fitness training notes

### 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)
- Drinking water on challenge days
- A donation to a community project in one of the countries in which we operate
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- A contribution towards funding the reduction of carbon emissions through Climate Care's portfolio of award winning projects
- An English speaking first aid trained challenge leader and full local support team
- Equipment as per the challenge activity
- Internal transfers (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- UK-based 24-hour emergency support line
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

### Before you go

### On your challenge

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> <li>· Visa (if required)</li> <li>· Travel to and from the UK airport of departure</li> <li>· Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> <li>· Tips</li> <li>· Departure Tax (if applicable)</li> </ul> |
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## 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 12 weeks before departure (by 17/02/2021), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 20/06/2021). 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 12 - 20 participants

### Small group supplement

The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 12 participants. We can run this trip with 6-11 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £95. 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.

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**Optional extras**

Single room supplements\*  
Business class upgrades\*  
Extensions at end of trip\*  
Travel insurance  
(\*subject to availability)

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**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 <https://www.campbellirvine.com/charitychallenge>.

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### Level of Difficulty

The Madagascar Trek is graded as “tough”.

You can tell your supporters that on your Madagascar challenge you will be:

- Trekking 5 - 6 hours a day for 6 days
- Battling the terrain of the Madagascar massif
- Camping out in basic conditions

### Typical Day

You will trek for about 5 - 6 hours a day in the heat. Depending on the weather and the day, rest/water stops will be set up regularly, where you can regroup, rest and relax while drinking water and eating your snacks. Lunch will be a packed lunch stopping in a reasonable spot. You will get to your campsite in the afternoon where you can relax, have a drink and enjoy the sunset.

### 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 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 Madagascar trek, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- You will be trekking through the remote Madagascar massif
- Terrain can be tricky
- Basic bathroom facilities

### 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 the [Responsible Tourism](#) section on our website.

## Flights

You will be flying overnight from London to Antananarivo airport. Your flight tickets will be e-mailed to you before departure. 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](mailto:flights@charitychallenge.com) for further assistance).

## Visa

You can get a 30-day tourist visa for a fee (€31 - subject to change so please double check before travel and bring exact change) at the airport on arrival. Make sure an entry stamp is recorded in your passport. A tourist visa has a maximum validity of 3 months and isn't extendable.

Your passport must be valid for a minimum period of 6 months from the date of entry into Madagascar. You should have at least 2 blank pages in your passport on arrival.

You will be asked for evidence of onward or return travel at check-in in the UK and on arrival in Madagascar.

## Insurance

Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenges is our main concern which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy that will cover you for the adventurous nature of your challenge. 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 by clicking [here](#).

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

## Vaccinations & Medicines

### Vaccinations

For up to date vaccination information please check the Travel Health Pro page: [https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/134/madagascar#Vaccine\\_recommendations](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/134/madagascar#Vaccine_recommendations)

Charity Challenge team are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your GP or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements. Your GP may ask questions about the specific locations that you are visiting, and as such it may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

### Medication

- Carry medicines (including those bought over the counter) in their correctly labelled original packaging, as issued by the pharmacist. These should be carried in your hand luggage.
- Consider packing a spare supply of medication in the hold luggage in case of loss of hand luggage

- A letter from the prescriber detailing the medicines with the generic names for the medications can be helpful for border control checks, and in case medicines have to be replaced or medical help is required
- Carry a note from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery for controlled substances and injection medications
- Take out an appropriate level of travel health insurance including repatriation and specific cover for any pre-existing illnesses

N.B. Some medications are banned abroad so please check. You can find further information at <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/43/medicines-abroad>

### **Malaria**

There is a high risk of malaria in Madagascar. Please consult your travel nurse or visit a travel clinic for further information. <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/134/madagascar#Malaria>

## **Climate & Terrain**

### **Climate**

You will be walking through varied terrain with some cover of trees and vegetation. Temperatures vary at this time of year but average at about 18 degrees centigrade.

### **Terrain**

This trek takes place in the untouched Madagascar massif which can be barren and rocky with sections of lush vegetation. It can vary in slope and altitude and during the trek you will summit Pic Imarivolanitra.

## **Training**

A good level of fitness is definitely required. Anyone who leads a fairly active and moderately healthy lifestyle should be able to complete the challenge, as long as they train regularly over a period of at least three months leading up to it. Don't forget that the temperature and climate will be different from the UK, and that you will be exercising constantly for a number of days. 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](#)

### Luggage allowance & valuables

Luggage should be kept to the absolute minimum – details of what to pack are provided in your Kit List. You will need to carry a daypack during the day while the luggage vehicle will carry your main rucksack. Your daypack should be about 35-litre capacity. NB: you should take a soft-sided bag or rucksack as hard suitcases are too unwieldy. Your main pack should be 70-80 litres capacity. On your outward journey, please wear your trekking gear, hiking boots, and carry a spare change of clothing in your hand luggage. No formal clothes are needed.

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.

### Leadership

There will be an English-speaking challenge leader who will be responsible for the logistics and co-ordination of your challenge. They will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group. The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group, and so on. While we will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary, we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that may occur. In all such circumstances, your challenge leader will have the final say.

### Group Size

Each group is intended to be 12 people minimum in order to run and a maximum of approx. 20 people. We will be able to run this challenge for 6 to 11 people by charging a small group supplement of around £95 which will be added to your final balance invoice (self funders) or charged to your charity (minimum sponsorship or flexi).

### Clothing & equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, well-worn in boots will be indispensable, particularly coupled with some really good quality walking socks. You don't need a clean pair every day, but enough to make sure you have dry socks each morning. The benefits of a comfortable day sack cannot be underestimated, so make sure that you train with this. Other essentials are high quality light weight waterproof jacket and trousers, and technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. Walking poles are also recommended, as a preventative as well as for anyone with any pre-existing leg injuries or niggles. 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 Outdoor Hire and Cotswold Outdoor

### Do we need to take our own sleeping bags and mats?

Yes, you will need to bring a light sleeping bag. A sleeping bag liner, which can be used in place of your sleeping bag if you get too hot, is also advisable. An inflatable mattress is provided. Also see [Kit List](#).

## Accommodation & Toilets

### Accommodation

Camping throughout the trek is in two person tents. At the end of the trek, you will be staying in more comfortable accommodation in a hotel. If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with, please let Charity Challenge know in advance.

### Toilets

We arrange basic toilet pits which will be dug out in the camps. Your camp team will provide the supplies needed to keep up group hygiene. There will be no showers other than the first and last nights. Please take plenty of wet wipes and anti-bacterial hand gel with you. There are no toilets on the trek route during the day, so you must make sure you bury all waste and carry out wet wipes.

## Food & Drink

Each morning you will be provided with a very filling breakfast. Lunch will be a packed lunch, while dinner will vary between Western and local 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.

## Money

**Currency:** The local currency in Madagascar is Malagasy Ariary. The most accepted foreign currency is Euro, but US dollars and GBP are easily changed. If you are taking money to change, please take small bills.

**Credit cards:** Major credit cards are sometimes accepted at larger hotels. Other than that their use is limited and are not generally accepted in restaurants, shops etc. Bring enough money and do not carry all your cash on you. Cash point machines can be found, but are rare in smaller towns. You won't need a credit card during the actual trek.

**Spending money:** You will not need to carry a large amount of money during this trip, and other than at the start and end of the trek, you will be away from any foreign exchanges or banks. We recommend that you take a sufficient amount of cash. Somewhere in the region of £200 in Euros should be enough to cover presents, tips, and drinks. You will be able to make purchases in Euros so you should bring low denominations.

**Tips:** Tipping is personal and at your sole discretion. You should only tip if you feel that you have received good service. We recommend approx. €70 for the entire trip which should be given to the challenge leader at the end of the challenge, who will distribute it among the support team. In the event that a particular member of staff gives you extra service you might leave him spare trekking gear at the end. If you do want to give one member of staff an extra tip, please also leave this until the end and allocate over and above the recommended tipping amount. Make sure you have plenty of €1 and €2 coins for tipping.

### Phone & WiFi

Phone signal is available, but intermittent.

There is no opportunity to recharge any electrical equipment during the trek, but if you want to bring a solar charger these can work well to charge phones. There are charge points in your rooms at the hotel.

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

The challenge is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's walking ability. This is allowed for. There will be a staff member at the back of the group at all times to ensure that you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace. In the event of an emergency, one of our backup vehicles will take you to the nearest clinic or to simply rest in. We are always in contact with the backup vehicles and medical services are available in the nearby towns.

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## Any more questions?

Contact us:

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[www.charitychallenge.com](http://www.charitychallenge.com)

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