

CH>RITY  
CH>LLENGE



TRIP NOTES

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**BELIEVE  
ACHIEVE  
INSPIRE**

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**BALKANS WINTER CHALLENGE  
KOSOVO**

Sat 05 Feb - Thu 10 Feb 2028





## In aid of your choice of charity

05 Feb - 10 Feb 2028

### 6 DAYS | KOSOVO & ALBANIA | CHALLENGING

Both Albania and Kosovo are countries with unspoiled landscapes, and offering a chance to encounter pristine nature without contamination or deforestation. The slow pace of a traditional way of life is a great escape and winter is the perfect time to get out and challenge yourself in the fresh, crisp air.

The paths are well-trodden including ancient trade routes and forest trails. As you walk in the mountains, the landscapes open up and the vistas will be beautiful with only the sounds of nature all around. You'll tackle the second highest mountain in Kosovo, Bistra Peak (2,651m), and encounter one of the longest mountain ridges in the Balkans.

From the Valbona valley, in the eastern part of the Albanian Alps, you'll follow trails taking you to high ridges with spectacular views of the Accursed Mountains. The final challenge is to climb the Rrogami Spike with stunning photographic opportunities over the Grykat e Hapta (2,625m) jagged ridge line and valley below.

- Snowshoeing on ancient trade routes, now forming part of the Via Dinarica Trail (1,930km from Slovenia to Macedonia)
- Trek to Bistra Summit (2,651m), the second highest peak in Kosovo
- Trek to up the ridge of Mount Ošljak, one of the longest mountain ridges in the Balkans
- Pass through forest trails and hidden villages from Valbona
- Gaze upon Albania's wild Accursed Mountains

## YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

### DAY 1 Sat 05 Feb

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#### **Fly to Tirana; transfer to Prevala (Kosovo) 180 km/3hrs**

At the airport you'll meet the rest of the team and start your journey to Albania. On arrival at Mother Theresa International airport at Tirana, you'll be met by the local charity challenge leader and transferred to Prevala in Kosovo. The border crossings are fairly informal, but make sure you have your passport handy. Once at the hotel, you'll have a briefing and your first group dinner. (D)

Accommodation: Hotel

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### DAY 2 Sun 06 Feb

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#### **Walk to Bistra Summit (2,651m) approx. 10km/5hrs**

Just a short walk from your hotel is the start of today's hike along a 600-year-old trade route which connected Skopje in Macedonia and Prizren in Kosovo. The route leads up into alpine meadows and along a dramatic ridge line, known as The Edge, before reaching Bistra Peak (2,651m), the second highest peak in Kosovo. Along your path, you'll cross the source of the Lumbardhi River which runs through the heart of Prizren. The views at the top over Kosovo and Macedonia are amazing, looking over to Ošljak peak (2,212km), Sharr mountains ridge and below you should see Jazhinca Lake. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel

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### DAY 3 Mon 07 Feb

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#### **Snowshoeing on Mount Ošljak (approx. 11 km; 4hrs); transfer to Valbona (120km/3hrs)**

To start the walk today you'll pass through a forest, which takes about 1 hour, before reaching a meadow hill through which you'll steadily climb to reach the long ridge. The ridge of this mountain is very beautiful and is one of the longest in the Balkans. Weather permitting, the views here are stunning with the Sharr mountain range to your left, the city of Prizren and Pashtrik peak (1,986m) in front of you. To the right side, you will see the Black peak (2,536m) and Pashallore peak (2,092m) in the distance. Returning the same way, after lunch you'll say farewell to Kosovo and take a bus transfer to Valbona in Albania, your base for the next 3 nights. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel or guesthouse

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### DAY 4 Tue 08 Feb

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#### **Snowshoeing around Mount Rosi (2,524m) approx. 15km/5-6hrs**

After breakfast, your snowshoeing takes you on a forest trail leading to an area underneath the rocky dome of Mount Rosi, known locally as "Buni i Brahimit". With good visibility, the views are magnificent and you can even see the snowy dome of Jezerca, the highest peak (2,695m) of the Accursed Mountains. On your return, you'll stop for a delicious homemade lunch with a shepherd's family in the hamlet of Kukaj and then continue down to the valley for a well-earned rest. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel or guesthouse

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**DAY 5** *Wed 09 Feb*

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**Conquering Kinji Rrogamit "The Rrogami Spike"(1,860m) (8.2km/5-6hrs)**

On your final day you'll walk as much of the Kinji Rrogamit, 'The Rrogami Spike', as weather conditions allow. The mountain range in front of the hotel is the target and the trail starts with a steady climb towards the peak on a narrow snow-covered forestry road. On reaching a high plateau, the views towards the Grykat e Hapta (2,625m) jagged ridge line are amazing and, once here, you'll stop for a picnic lunch before descending and completing your circular walk. In the afternoon there will be time for a well-deserved rest or you can explore the local area. You'll have a celebration dinner tonight to reward your achievements. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel or guesthouse

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**DAY 6** *Thu 10 Feb*

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**Transfer to Tirana airport (4hrs/190km); fly to London**

This morning there may be some free time before you transfer to Tirana to take your flight to London. (B)  
(Please note: you will need to purchase your own lunch today.)

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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 £295.00 when you book

Then a balance of £894.00 (10 weeks before your challenge)

Raise as much as you can for your charity.

### MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £295.00 when you book

Raise a minimum of £1825.00 for your charity.

### FLEXI

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Registration fee of £295.00 when you book

Then £295.00 towards challenge costs (10 weeks before your challenge)

Raise a minimum of £1225.00 for your charity.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

### Before you go

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- 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.
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, visa information, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Sponsorship forms
- Access to UK based training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- Warm up exercise routines
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule
- Fitness training notes
- Fundraising advice
- Public liability insurance
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules

### On your challenge

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

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

### Before you go

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- Visa (if required)

### On your challenge

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- Tips

- Any covid tests required for entry to any countries or places of interest on your challenge itinerary
- Any covid tests required for entry to any countries or places of interest on your challenge itinerary
- Any covid tests required for entry to any countries or places of interest on your challenge itinerary
- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)
- Departure Tax (if applicable)
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- Departure Tax (if applicable)

## THE DETAILS

### Registration fee in instalments

The first instalment of £150 is due at the time of booking. The second instalment of £145 will automatically be debited from your credit/debit card 31 days after you book. We can only accept payment for your registration fee by instalments if you book and pay online. Please note that when paying your registration fee in instalments, a £10 admin fee will be added to your first registration fee payment. Please note that your booking will not be processed (and we will not send an authorisation request to your charity) until we receive the payment for your second instalment. Your place on the challenge will only be held until 31 days from your initial booking. If we are unable to take your second instalment, your booking will be cancelled and normal cancellation terms will apply.

### 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 13/11/2027), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 09/03/2028). 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 13 - 16 participants

Small group supplement

The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 13 participants. We can run this trip with 10-12 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.

Optional extras

Travel insurance  
Business class upgrades\*  
Single room supplements\*  
(\*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 <https://www.campbellirvine.com/charitychallenge>.

## 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 travel insurance questions, please refer to our main [FAQs](#) page or for any specific queries, please contact us at [bookings@charitychallenge.com](mailto:bookings@charitychallenge.com).

## Level of difficulty

Challenging: A “challenging” trip will test someone who is relatively fit and has a spirit of adventure. You may have had some previous experience, but this is not necessary as long as the correct training is undertaken.

You can tell your supporters that on your Snowshoeing Challenge you will be:

- Snowshoeing for around 5-6 hours per day.
- Reaching the Bistra Summit, Kosovo's second highest mountain (2,651m)
- Conquering the Rrogrami Spike (1,860m)

## Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up Challenge Safe, an advanced and thorough safety management system. Challenge Safe 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 challenge activity itself. Your welfare is absolutely paramount.

In terms of your Albania challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- Most of the walks are on well-defined footpaths, mountain trails and some dirt tracks. There may be some steep ascents and descents and you should be confident dealing with heights.
- The weather conditions in the mountains can be changeable. Make sure you carry an additional warm layer and waterproof jacket. It is important that you have waterproof boots
- Ensure that you keep yourself hydrated by drinking lots of fluids.

This challenge is suitable for the average walker who is prepared to put in some physical preparation. Whilst we hope the weather will allow for snowshoeing throughout the challenge, due to the nature of global warming, please come prepared for trails that are not as snow covered as anticipated.

## 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 contribute 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.

Charity Challenge is trying to reduce the use of single use plastic on our trips. Rather than purchasing single use plastic water bottles, take water purification tablets or invest in a filter water bottle.

### Flights

You will be flying from London to Tirana and returning via the same route. 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). Your flight info can also be found in your Account Area under 'Flights' once they have been confirmed.

### Visa

You need a valid passport to fly from London to Tirana. For UK passport holders, you don't need a visa for trips of 90 days or less. Your passport must be valid for a full six months from your date of entry into Albania and Kosovo. Non-UK passport holders should consult their nearest Albanian and Kosovo embassy regarding visa requirements.

### Vaccinations & Medicines

For up to date vaccination information please check the Travel Health Pro page:  
[https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/2/albania#Vaccine\\_recommendations](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/2/albania#Vaccine_recommendations)

The Charity Challenge team are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your doctor or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements. Your doctor 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>

## Climate & Terrain

### Climate

Landlocked Kosovo shares borders with Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania and is ringed by mountains. It has a continental climate, with hot summers and cold winters. To be in Kosovo when snow should be at its best, travel between January and March. The average daytime temperature in January is -9C and can reach as low as -15C, with February being slightly warmer.

In the coastal lowlands of Albania, the climate is typically Mediterranean, but the highlands where you will be based has a more continental influenced climate. This means in the mountainous regions, winters can be very harsh with snowfall and low temperatures.

### Terrain

Most of the walks are on well-defined footpaths, mountain trails, some dirt tracks combined with sections of unpaved mountain roads. Snowshoes will be provided but be aware that occasionally it may be slippery in parts.

## Training

The ideal training for this challenge is, naturally, hill walking. However, if you do not have the luxury of living near the hills, then the stairs at home (or an office block) are a great place to start. Most training should be part of an ongoing lifestyle, but if this is not the case then you should begin training 2-4 months prior to the challenge and gradually build up as suggested. Remember to use the walking boots that you will be wearing on the challenge in order to get them worn in and take the daysack that you will be using during the challenge.

There is no substitute for walking in the hills so try, if possible, to get out on a weekend and train in an area with steep hills. You should progress to training with your boots on as soon as possible so they are worn in and comfortable for your challenge. The more you exercise before the expedition, the more you will get out of it. Also see your Charity Challenge Trekking Training Guide and Fitness Training notes in your account area.

## 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

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). During the challenge, your bags will be transported by vehicle between accommodation stated in your itinerary. You will not have to carry your main pack.

Whilst 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. There will also be numerous local support guides and staff to assist them. The challenge leader will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

### Group size

Each group is intended to be 12 people minimum in order to run and a maximum of approx. 16 people. We will be able to run this challenge for 10 to 11 people by charging a small group supplement of £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, waterproof, 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 Gore-Tex waterproof and windproof jackets and trousers, as mountain weather can change suddenly, and technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. It is best to wear layers of clothes so that if it gets warm some can be taken off. Make sure you bring a warm hat and gloves with you! Walking poles are also recommended, as a preventative as well as for anyone with any pre-existing leg injuries or niggles.

Please click [here](#) for a full kit list for this challenge. As a Charity Challenge participant, you will get members only

benefits and/or discounts at a wide range of clothing and equipment suppliers including [Outdoorhire](#), [Cotswold Outdoor](#), [Snow + Rock](#), [Water to Go](#), [Sporttape](#) and [Nomad & MASTA](#).

## Accommodation & toilets

### Accommodation

On this challenge, the hotels or guesthouses offer a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar and garden. Generally, rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities. 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](mailto:challenges@charitychallenge.com)

### Toilets

These range from basic during the challenge to normal western standards in the accommodation. Remember to bring some toilet paper with you as it may be difficult to find during your challenge day.

## Food & drink

The food will be very filling and nutritious. Breakfast will consist of eggs, ham, cheese, jam or honey and tea/coffee. Lunches are picnics with meat, cheese, fresh vegetables and fruit, chocolate or cookies. Dinner will be three courses: soup followed by a main course and dessert. Plenty of drinking water will be available to keep you hydrated. You may want to bring some extra snacks, such as cereal bars, nutrigains, dried fruits etc. You can buy extra food or alcohol at the hotels/guesthouses if you wish.

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, with a limited choice, it may be more difficult to cater for special diets. The local team are very good at trying to accommodate different dietary requirements but a vegan and gluten free diet will be difficult to cater for. It may be necessary to supplement your diet with food products that you are used to eating, as well as snacks from home. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies.

## Money

**Currency:** The national currency is the Albanian Lek. The Euro is the official currency in Kosovo and is also accepted in Albania. For up to date currency exchange, go to [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com).

**Cash:** There are ATMs available at Tirana airport and in the larger towns. For travel around the country it is a good idea to carry cash.

**Credit cards:** ATMs are generally OK. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are the most widely accepted and may be used at cash points. In smaller towns, banks do not necessarily have cash points. Credit cards can be used to purchase goods and services in some shops, hotel and restaurants in Albania and Kosovo.

**Spending money:** You will not need a large amount of money during this trip. Albanian Lek can't be exchanged outside the country, so exchange them or spend them before you leave. Although the Euro is widely accepted in Albania; you'll get a better deal for things in general if you use Lek. Approximately £100 should be sufficient, but please

take more if you plan to extend your stay or shop a lot!

**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. EUR40 per person and this should be given to the challenge leader at the end of the challenge who will distribute it amongst the local support team. In bars and restaurants tips are very common and are about 10% of the total bill.

### Phone & Wi-fi

Most of the accommodation you are in will have limited Wi-Fi which you will be able to use, but please do not rely upon this. You will have phone signal in almost all places on the challenge. Please remember that Albania and Kosovo are NOT in the EU so the EU Roaming Regulations do not apply and you will be charged when using your mobile data.

### Emergencies

The event 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. If we find somebody is unable to walk at all, then we can transport him or her from one location to the next with the help of our staff. Throughout the challenge, back-up support will be close by.

### Typical day

You will wake early in time for breakfast and prepare your rucksack for the day ahead. The activity will start around 0830hrs depending on the weather. The number of hours spent walking will depend on the size and ability of the group. There will be plenty of refreshment stops, and visits to places of natural beauty and interest. In the evening you will have dinner at your hotel or guesthouse.

### Pre-Existing Medical Conditions

We do not professionally vet your medical details. Please assess for yourself whether you are fit and able to take on the challenge. Please review the detailed Trip Notes and itinerary to get a better idea of what is involved. Please speak to your doctor or specialist if you have any concerns about taking part. If you suffer from a severe allergy, you are required to contact us to discuss any requirements. If you think that there are things we can do to make the challenge more accessible/comfortable for you, it is your responsibility to let us know, and we will then let you know if we can accommodate your request. Whilst we will do our best to put in place appropriate measures we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### Medical Support

First Aid qualified staff will be provided with the medical details that you give on your booking form but please note that they are on the challenge to support with medical matters related to the challenge environment and terrain itself, i.e. heat/cold, high altitude and so on. They will deal with any incidents and accidents (cuts, sprains, breaks and so on).

They are not intended to continue any ongoing specialist medical care that you receive in the UK for pre-existing medical conditions, and should not be assumed to have any professional experience of your specific medical condition.

If you have any specific needs around pre-existing medical conditions, you should discuss with your family doctor or specialist in advance and can discuss any advice given by them with the challenge leader or doctor.

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## Any more questions?

Contact us:

+ 44 (0)20 8346 0500

[info@charitychallenge.com](mailto:info@charitychallenge.com)

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

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