



TRIP NOTES

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# BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

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ATLAS MOUNTAIN CHALLENGE  
MOROCCO

Sat 02 May - Wed 06 May 2020





## In aid of Minds@Work

02 May - 06 May 2020



### 5 DAYS | MOROCCO | CHALLENGING

Take some quality time away from modern-day distractions to focus on your physical and mental wellbeing on the Minds in the Wild challenge to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco. The challenge will test you physically as you trek across valleys, and over mountain passes with spectacular views, in aid of Minds@Work, a community of working people who have come together to eradicate the stigma of mental illness and create a healthier working world.

On this challenge you will start your journey of discovery in Marrakech, where you will meet your trekking team. You will then depart from the city and head for the next three days on a trek through the Mid-Atlas Mountain range, camping at night under the stars.

You will be joined by Geoff McDonald, global wellbeing advocate and co-founder of Minds@Work, who through some informal evening workshops around the camp fire, will help you to navigate the challenges of creating mentally and emotionally healthy and human workplaces where individuals can flourish and organisations prosper.

- Invest some time and focus on your physical and mental wellbeing
- Trek through the spectacular Atlas Mountains
- Experience the vibrant city of Marrakech
- Support Minds@Work, who are creating mentally and emotionally healthy human workplaces
- Take part in workshops focussed on improving mental wellbeing at work

## YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

### DAY 1 Sat 02 May

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#### International departure from London

Challenge day has finally arrived and it's off to the airport to meet the rest of the team. On arrival in Marrakech, you'll be met and transferred to your hotel. After settling in you'll meet up for your first talk and team dinner before getting a good night's sleep. (D)

Accommodation: 3 Star Hotel in Marrakech

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### DAY 2 Sun 03 May

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#### Drive from Marrakech to the Atlas Mountains; walk from Tizi n'Oughbar pass to Sremt valley (drive 4hrs; trek 5hrs/16km)

After an early breakfast and final briefing, you leave Marrakech and the scenery changes quickly as the road heads into the High Atlas Mountains towards the Ait Bougmez Valley via the Tizi n'Oughbar Pass (2,000m). From here, the trek begins following a track up to a high plateau with panoramic views over the Atlas mountain range. From here the route descends to the village of Sremt (1,700m) and to your overnight camp. Once you have settled and unpacked in your tent, Geoff will run a workshop around the camp fire on mental wellbeing. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camp

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### DAY 3 Mon 04 May

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#### Sremt village to Tamezrit plateau through the Ait Bougmez Valley (trek 7-8 hrs/24km)

This morning sees an early start walking along an ancient mule trail, still used by the Sremt people today, to reach Ait Bougmez, known as "Happy Valley". Passing striking limestone rock formations, the path continues up to Ait Ouriaat pass, 2,600m, from where there are panoramic views over the Ait Bougmez Valley. From here the path descends passing through oak and juniper trees to reach the first village of this pretty valley where you'll stop for lunch under the shade of walnut trees. Feeling rested, the afternoon walk passes through fields and orchards before arriving at Tamezrit plateau where you'll camp below Jbel Mgoun, 4,068m, the third highest peak of the Atlas Mountains. Once again you will have the chance to engage in the topic of mental wellbeing at work, sharing ideas and tools to improve the environment back at your place of work. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camp

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### DAY 4 Tue 05 May

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#### Walk to Tafenfent and Abachkou; drive to Marrakech (trek 5-6 hrs/19km; drive 4 hrs)

Leaving the Ait Bougmez Valley this morning, you pass through small villages and will cross the Arous River before continuing up to Tafenfent plateau. Here you may see cattle grazing in the pastures as you trek along a mule path through oak trees before descending down to the red valley of Abachkou (1,700m). Here, you'll leave the mountains behind and drive back to Marrakech via Imi n'Ifri and Demnat. Celebrate the trip and all your achievements over a final celebratory meal together. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: 3 Star Hotel in Marrakech

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**DAY 5** *Wed 06 May*

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**Fly back to London**

Today you wave goodbye to Marrakech and head home to the UK with some amazing memories and new-found friends. (B)

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**NB**

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 other unpredictable factors. 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.

Should you suffer from vertigo, it is worth considering that on most mountain treks there will be occasional exposure to sheer drops. You should, therefore, discuss the particular itinerary of your choice with a member of our team.

## HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

### SELF FUNDER

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Pay a registration fee of £500.00 when you book

Then a balance of £1080.00

(10 weeks before your challenge)

Raise as much as you can for your charity.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

### Before you go

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- 15% off Cotswold Outdoor, Cycle Surgery, Snow and Rock, and Runners Need
- Sponsorship forms
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, visa information, travel insurance, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Public liability insurance
- Fundraising advice
- Fitness training notes
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning

### On your challenge

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- 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 donation to a community project in one of the countries in which we operate
- UK-based 24-hour emergency support line
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- International flights to and from the UK (including all known UK air taxes, and fuel surcharges, at the time of costing)
- Internal transfers (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- Equipment as per the challenge activity
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- Drinking water on challenge days
- An English speaking first aid trained challenge leader and full local support team
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

### Before you go

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- Visa (if required)
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)

### On your challenge

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- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)



## 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 08/02/2020), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 03/06/2020). 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 20 - 30 participants

### Optional extras

Extensions at end of trip\*  
 Single room supplements\*  
 Travel insurance  
 Business class upgrades\*  
 (\*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>.

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### Level of Difficulty

The Atlas Mountain Challenge is graded as Challenging, which is suitable for someone who has some basic experience with hill walking/trekking. During your Atlas Mountain Challenge you will be trekking for three days in the Atlas Mountains on uneven terrain and camping out at night with fairly basic facilities.

### Typical day

You will wake early, in time for a hearty breakfast, and will be trekking for around 5-8 hours, depending on the day (see itinerary for details). There will be stops for snacks, lunch and mindfulness. Each evening in camp, you can relax and enjoy some focussed time to look at mental wellbeing and how we can all improve our own wellbeing and that of our friends, family and work colleagues.

### 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 a thorough safety management system. 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 Atlas Mountain Challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- Expect a wide and unpredictable range of temperatures.
- Nights will certainly be quite cold, but seasons can be unpredictable, and you need to dress for both warm and very cold temperatures.
- Trekking can cause dehydration, so you need to keep hydrated, cover up with suncream and ensure that you are replenishing salts and sugars.

### 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.

### Flights



You will be flying from London to Marrakech and returning from Marrakech to London. The flight will take approx. 4 hrs. 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

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.

### 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](#).

### Vaccinations & Medicines

For up to date vaccination information please check the Travel Health Pro page: [https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/154/morocco#Vaccine\\_recommendations](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/154/morocco#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>

### Climate & Terrain

### Climate

Early mornings will immediately warm as soon as the sun rises, and the days will be hot and bright. Temperatures can be anywhere from 15 to 25 degrees centigrade. As soon as the sun sets, the temperature drops rapidly and is often warm clothing is essential. Nights can be around 8 to 15 degrees centigrade. Walking in the mountains you will need strong UV protection. Good quality warm equipment is essential all year round.

### Terrain

You will navigate trek along well-trodden paths that may be rocky underfoot.

### Training

Training and fitness is definitely required. Anyone who leads a fairly active and moderately healthy lifestyle should be okay as long as they train regularly over a period of a month or so leading up to the expedition. Don't forget that the temperature and altitudes are different from the UK. 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 (6-8 hours) several times with a weighted pack, up and down hills or on small mountains.

### Training weekends

We offer superb training weekends across various locations in the UK, from Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon. These training weekends not only help you become physically prepared for the challenge, but our experienced instructors and leaders will talk you through your clothing and equipment, camp craft, health and wellbeing, trekking skills (walking on different terrain/at altitude/at night/using walking poles), teamwork on expedition and many more themes designed to make you get the most out of your challenge. The weekends are great ways for you to get out into the mountains of the UK, while also meeting other Charity Challengers and sharing your experiences.

### Luggage allowance and valuables

As no formal clothes are needed whilst trekking, luggage should be kept to the 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. This is generally one piece at approximately 20kg, however, do check this with your airline before you fly. On your outward journey, please wear your hiking boots, and carry a spare change of clothing in your hand luggage. 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. 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

Your group is intended to be a minimum of 30 people in order to run and a maximum of 50 people.

## Clothing and 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, and 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.

## Accommodation & Toilets

### Accommodation

At the start and finish, you will be in a comfortable three-star hotel in Marrakech. Rooms are twin share. You can request and pay for a single room (subject to availability, and with a single supplement fee). During the challenge you will be camping in large tents of 4 to 5 people, with mattresses provided, with shared toilet facilities but no showers for two nights. 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). You will need to bring a warm sleeping bag (three to four season).

### Toilets

During the challenge, you will be camping and toilet facilities will be basic. It is advisable to bring your own toilet tissue. The hotel in Marrakech has western style toilets.

## Food & Drink

You will be served a variety of Moroccan food. All meals are healthy and nourishing. Lunches will be in the form of a picnic lunch, ideal for carrying on the trek. There will be plenty of food to satisfy hungry appetites, but please let Charity Challenge know if you have any specific dietary requirements.

Whilst our team in Morocco will do their best to meet any special requests, gluten free food is quite limited. We recommend you take a supply of gluten free bread, oats, and pasta that can be used for daily meals as well as gluten free snack bars during the 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](http://www.xe.com). 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).

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

**Credit cards:** Widely accepted in the larger urban centres, although a 5% charge is often charged. You should bring one in case of emergencies.

**Spending money:** 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), although travellers cheques are only exchanged at larger banks.

**Tipping:** Tipping is of course discretionary. However, tourism is a tipping industry and the guides in Morocco will generally receive a tip at the end of a job well done. We recommend GBP£30 per person (in Moroccan Dirhams) 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.

### 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.

### Emergencies

This challenge is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's trekking 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. In the case of an emergency, all leaders are carrying radios and will coordinate a swift evacuation off the mountain. Their decision is final in all cases.



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There is nothing more inspiring than the view from the high Atlas Mountains it can make you believe if you can do this you can do anything.

Alex Magill

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The mountains create the adventure, but the people in the group make the trip.

Paul Mills

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This experience was amazing! Personally for me, it really was life changing and exceeded all expectations. I have made a group of friends for life, pushed myself physically and mentally but more importantly raised money for a great cause. I have come home a different person.

Jamie Leadbeatter

# CH>RITY CH>LLENGE

## Any more questions?

Contact us:

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