

## MOROCCO - Tichka to Toubkal Traverse



### TREK OVERVIEW

A two-part trek that takes you first through the delightful western section of the Atlas mountains, a seldom visited area where you will ascend from the lush gardens of the valleys up through one of the few niches in the mighty cliffs that encircle the lost world of the Tichka Plateau, firmly ringed with crests, walls and ridges. Here the spring irrigated pastures are grazed by the Berber shepherds in the summer months, but will be buried under snow in the winter. We exit from the plateau following the Nfis River through tranquil oak and juniper forests to lower and warmer altitudes.

A short vehicle transfer along the Tizi n Test road takes us to the Berber village of Wirgane and a night in a hotel, before setting off on the second part of this trip. We will be making our way towards Toubkal via the back door following the Azzaden valley up to the delightful, quiet old Lepiney refuge nestled below the vertical south face of Tazarhart Mountain. Our approach to Toubkal gives us face on views of North Africa's highest mountain and the route we take up the following day. After summiting Toubkal it is happily downhill for a final night in the High Atlas Mountains, and then back to Marrakech the following day.

### Participation Statement

AdventurePeaks recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

### Adventure Travel – Accuracy of Itinerary

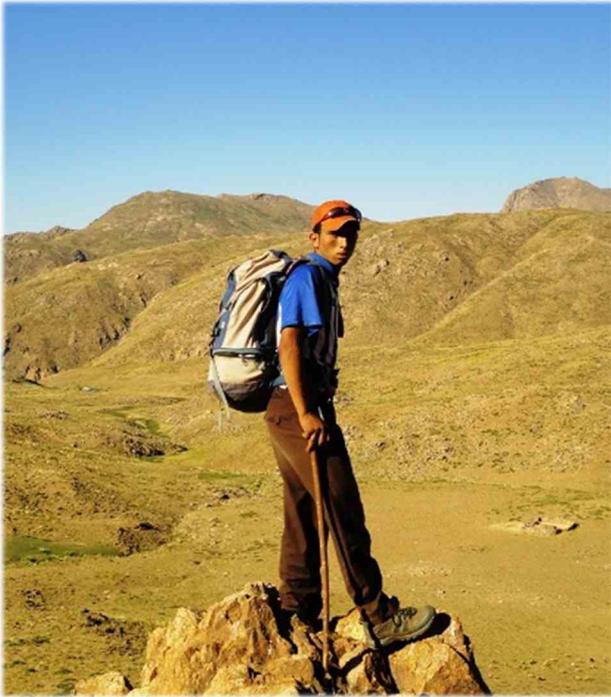
Although it is our intention to operate this itinerary as printed, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops and the duration of the day may vary from those outlined. You should be aware that some events are beyond our control and we would ask for your patience.

### PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE/FITNESS

Previous walking experience is required as is a reasonable degree of fitness. Most days involve around 5 to 7 hours walking plus plenty of rest stops. If you are used to long days in the hills and can cope with some dry and hot conditions you will have the right level of fitness to fully enjoy your time on this trek.

### GROUP AND LEADERS

A fully qualified UK leader will accompany all groups of four or more passengers. He/she will be assisted by an experienced Moroccan leader. Smaller or private groups will be led by an English speaking Moroccan guide. This trip is exclusive to AdventurePeaks.



### WEATHER

The weather should be pleasant during the day with cooler evenings and nights. Morocco is very hot from spring to autumn, the hottest months being June to August. The higher you are the cooler it will be. Walkers should realize however that weather in the high mountains is unpredictable and should be prepared for this. It will be cold on the early starts and in the evenings at altitude in early and late season.

### WHAT TO CARRY

This trek is fully supported by a team of mules who will transport your main baggage. You will only need to carry a light daypack at the very most. A 35l rucksack is a useful size to comfortably fit in essential items such as water bottle, camera, wet-weather gear and extra layers etc.

### CATERING ARRANGEMENTS

Our cooks pride themselves on their cooking, and ensure all food on the trek is freshly prepared using local ingredients and there is plenty for everyone. A typical menu on this trip would be:

**Breakfast:** Porridge or cereal, fresh bread with cheese, jam, margarine, fried eggs, omelettes, tea, coffee, hot chocolate and hot milk.

**Lunch:** A light lunch consisting of fresh salad, tinned fish or meat, bread, cheese, followed by fresh local fruit.

**Dinner:** A hot meal is served every night consisting of soup, traditional Moroccan cuisine of Tajine or couscous with meat and vegetables or the occasional pasta meal, followed by fresh fruit and drinks.

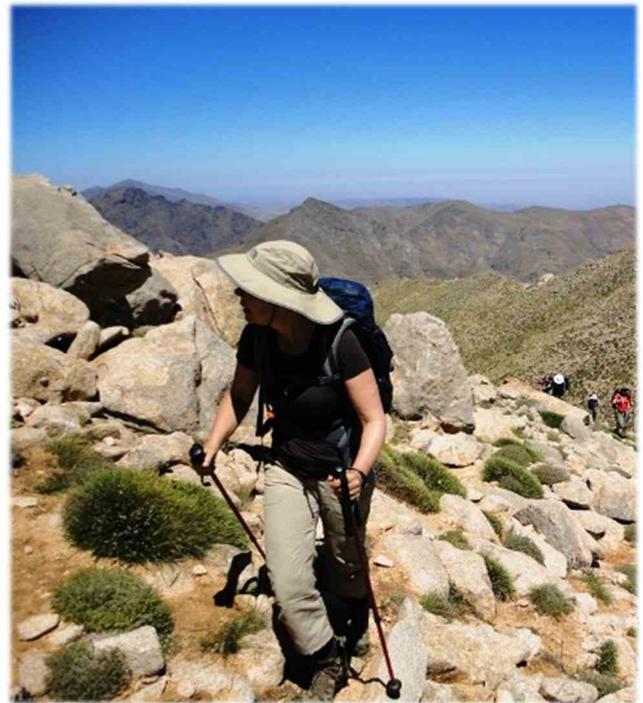
### ACCOMMODATION

In Marrakech you will stay in a 3\* hotel with a pool in a quiet part of town, 25 minutes walk from the main square. Twin, double or single rooms are available. In Taroudant we use a more basic 2\* hotel, centrally situated and with a small pool. On the first part of the trek you will spend the nights in 2-person tents. For the pleasant break at Wirgane between treks we stay in lovely rural hotel with gardens and a pool. On the second part we use a mix of auberges, gites and refuges where you should expect only basic facilities. Private rooms cannot be guaranteed and for the two nights which are in traditional mountain refuges only dormitory accommodation is provided.

### LANGUAGE AND TIME

**Language:** Arabic and Berber are the official languages but most people also speak French. English is spoken by our Marrakech representatives and most of our Moroccan guides, but it will be very basic.

**Time:** GMT/BST. Morocco has summer time as in UK, but the changeover is on different dates to us!



### HEALTH

All our UK leaders hold first aid certificates and carry a fully equipped first aid kit for medical emergencies. However you should bring your own supplies of plasters, blister prevention pads (Compeed), Paracetamol etc. and any medication you are taking. Contact your GP around eight weeks before your trip to check whether you need any vaccinations or other preventive measures. Country specific information and advice is published by the [National Travel Health Network and Centre](#), and useful information about healthcare abroad, including a country-by-country guide of reciprocal health care agreements with the UK, is available from [NHS Choices](#). Tap or stream water should never be drunk without first sterilizing with chlorine dioxide tablets or by boiling.

## INSURANCE

Insurance which covers mountain rescue, evacuation and medical expenses is **essential**. You should note there are no official mountain rescue services in Morocco and that any evacuation in the event of a serious medical emergency to the nearest hospital will be by land and not by helicopter. We will require a copy of your insurance prior to departure. Please also ensure your insurance covers you for walking above 4000m (some will exclude this option).

## ALTITUDE

If you are new to altitude you may have concerns about the effects. Don't worry because our itineraries allow sufficient time to acclimatise, and altitude rarely causes anyone any problems on this trip. The best way to avoid such symptoms is to walk at a gentle steady pace and drink plenty of fluid.

## USEFUL TIPS

Just in case your main luggage goes missing en route, it is a good idea to wear your boots on the plane. Most other things can be replaced but comfortable, well worn-in boots cannot. Pack important items in strong plastic bags.

## EQUIPMENT

A detailed equipment list is provided on booking but normal summer walking equipment is all that is required. For equipment purchases AdventurePeaks offers a 15% discount from their shop in Ambleside or online.



## BAGGAGE

For your own comfort travel light. Normally airlines restrict baggage to 20kg and on trek the weight for mules and porters should be kept to 15kg, (you will be wearing boots and one set of trekking clothes). Some items can be left at the hotel in Marrakech for your return.

## VISAS AND PERMITS

Visas for entry into Morocco are not required by nationals of the UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and most EU countries.

## LOCAL COSTS

All accommodation and most meals are included; please see the itinerary page for full details. Additional costs would include any drinks or snacks outside of mealtimes, showers when charged for, meals in Marrakech, tips for

local staff and taxis between the airport and Marrakech hotel.

## CURRENCY

The currency in Morocco is the dirham (MDH) but you cannot get dirham outside of Morocco - therefore take UK sterling, Euro or US\$ and exchange on arrival. Don't try and change money in the street in Morocco as it is illegal. ATM's and change bureaux are available in the arrivals hall at the airport.



## TIPPING

Tipping is an accepted part of life in Morocco. We generally tip our local staff as a whole and would recommend around £25 per person.

## ADVENTURE PEAKS KIT BAG

All Adventure Peaks clients who reside in the UK will receive a **FREE** kitbag for any treks outside the UK. The bag will be posted to you approx. 3 weeks prior to your departure. If you have travelled with us before and already have an Adventure Peaks kitbag, or reside outside the UK, we will send an alternative gift.

## FLIGHTS AND JOINING ARRANGEMENTS

Flights are NOT included as part of this holiday. Budget airlines offer a lot of flights to Marrakech from many regional UK airports, and sometimes very cheap deals can be found. As we expect clients to arrive at different times, we have not included transport between the airport and the hotel. A taxi will cost about £5, more at night. Please agree the price with the driver before getting in!

**The rendezvous for this trip is the HOTEL IN MARRAKECH in the evening of Day 1.**

A briefing with your leader will take place in the evening of day 1 in the hotel. Return flights can be booked for anytime on Day 13, or later if you wish to extend your stay in Morocco. *If you fly with Easyjet from Manchester your return flight will depart on the evening of day 12*

**PLEASE ENSURE YOU DO NOT PURCHASE YOUR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL (FLIGHTS OR OTHER) UNTIL WE HAVE GUARANTEED YOUR TRIP IS RUNNING**

## TICHKA TO TOUBKAL TRAVERSE ITINERARY

No	Day, date	Today we...	We stay at...	Accommodation...	Meals...
1	Sat	Fly	Marrakech	Hotel	
2	Sun	Transfer	Taroudant	Hotel	BD
3	Mon	Transfer and trek	Awsaghmelt (1800m)	Camp	BLD
4	Tue	Trek	Imi n Wanzig (2580m)	Camp	BLD
5	Wed	Trek	Imi n Wanzig (2580m)	Camp	BLD
6	Thu	Trek	Imi n Oscar (1900m)	Camp	BLD
7	Fri	Trek and transfer	Wirgane (1000m)	Hotel	BLD
8	Sat	Trek	TiziOussemm (1900m)	Gite	BLD
9	Sun	Trek	Lepiney (3050m)	Refuge	BLD
10	Mon	Trek	Toubkal (3205m)	Refuge	BLD
11	Tue	Summit day	Aremd (1900m)	Lodge	BLD
12	Wed	Transfer	Marrakech	Hotel	BLD
13	Thu	Fly	Home	Own bed!	B

**Day 1** Fly to Marrakech and make your way to the hotel. Your guide will meet you in the evening and brief you about the trip generally and the schedule for the next day.

**Day 2** In the morning you will transfer by minibus to the delightful town of Taroudant, at the foot of the Western Atlas mountains, travelling along Morocco's newest motorway towards Agadir for part of the journey. We will arrive in Taroudant for lunch. In the afternoon you will be given a short guided tour of this delightful little town and the rest of the day will be free for your own exploration.

**Day 3** After breakfast the journey continues up into the mountains to the north, along a recently reconstructed road to the village of Tazoudot ( or maybe further depending on the progress of the new road) passing the fields of wheat, olives and palms en route. This area seems like a small paradise with its banana plants, dates and walnut trees, beautiful purple bougainvillea, hollyhocks and geraniums. In the afternoon we walk on up the valley to the highest village (Awsaghmelt) next to which we will make camp. *3 to 4 hours walking.*

**Day 4** Above the village the path turns into a delightful side valley above which looms a high ridge in which there is a low 'nick' - the pass of Tizi n Targa. Sweeping zigzags ensure that gaining height is relatively painless and we reach the pass after about 3 hours. This is one of the gateways to the hidden Tichka Plateau, an extensive area of undulating high pastures ringed but ridges and tumbling cliffs. After lunch we can enjoy relatively level walking across the plateau, passing many flocks which graze this region in the summer months to our camp. *6 to 8 hours walking.*

**Day 5** From the azibØit is a long and steady climb to climb the mountain of Amendach (3382m). Our route ascends a lovely green valley around the back of the mountain, cumulating with a steep clamber across boulders to reach the summit. After enjoying the panorama looking across the Souss valley to the Anti Atlas, we descend the south side of the mountain directly back to camp, where we can make the most of washing in the lovely steam nearby. *6 to 7 hours walking.*

**Day 6** We start our walk down to Imi-n Oskar by following the spectacular gorge of Nfis River, which drains from the Tichka Plateau down through forests, gorges and villages to eventually reach the TizinØest road which crosses the High Atlas Mountain range from Agadir to Marrakech. On the way we pass waterfalls and deep pools, complete with frogs and dragonflies and a profusion of wild-flowers and bird life. There will be ample time for bathing opportunities at our lovely secluded camp on terraces beside the river. *4 to 5 hours walking.*

**Day 7** This morning we will continue our trek along the valley, passing through small villages, from Imi-n Oskar to Souk Sebte, a village so named as it has a weekly market on the seventh day of the week; Souk meaning "market" Sebte being "Seven". Here we meet our vehicles and say goodbye to our mules and muleteers who have helped us on the first part of this two part trek. A 2-hour drive up to the Tizi n Test then down the north side of the Atlas takes us to Wirgane and the delights of a night of luxury in the 'Sangler qui Fume' hotel. Tonight we can dine at a table, having had a good shower and a swim in the hotel pool! *5 hours walking.*

**Day 8** Following the Azzadene valley our route takes us into the Toubkal National park, passing through a special reserve to protect the Moufflon. We pass many villages that seem to have grown organically out of the red earth, up to the largest in the valley where we spend the night. *4 to 6 hours walking.*

**Day 9** A cracking day's walk today as we now ascend on up the valley through a juniper forest to the delightful summer village of AzibTamsoult. Above here the path now makes numerous switchbacks as it climbs up besides the spectacular Ihroulidene waterfalls, and then out into the open grassy bowl leading up the Tazarhart plateau. Nestled below the vertiginous cliffs is the delightful but basic Lepiney refuge. Time permitting we can explore further up the valley in the afternoon. *4 to 6 hours walking.*

**Day 10** A recently constructed path contours around the hillside before zigzagging up to a shallow col on the shoulder of Aguelzim at 3550m. Here spectacular views across to tomorrow's goal greet us as we look across the upper Mizane valley straight at Mount Toubkal. We descend to the large, modern Toubkal refuge for the night. *4 to 6 hours walking.*

**Day 11** An early start is normal for the ascent of Mount Toubkal. The ascent is not technical, but does involve crossing some loose ground, much of which can be avoided by following the guide carefully. Three to four hours usually sees everyone on top from where you can rest awhile and take in the 360 degree panorama from the top of North Africa's highest mountain. We return to the refuge by the same route and then make our way down the valley on a well used trail to the village of Aremd for our last night in the mountains. *7 to 9 hours walking.*

**Day 12** After breakfast we make the short walk down to the roadhead at Imlil to join with our vehicles that will take us back to Marrakech in time for lunch. The afternoon is free for sightseeing and shopping. **Flights with Easyjet back to Manchester depart this evening.**

**Day 13** Take a taxi to the airport to connect with your flight home.