

## Morocco - Toubkal in Winter



### **TREK OVERVIEW**

Mt Toubkal, known locally as Jebel Toubkal stands 4167m above sea level and commands superb views of the High Atlas Mountains. Our route passes through remote villages that offer an insight into the life of the Berbers, a culture that has hardly changed for centuries. Following a careful programme of acclimatization we aim to make an ascent of Ouanoukrim (4088m), Morocco's second highest summit and Toubkal (4167m), the highest mountain in North Africa. The views across the Jebel Sahro and towards the Sahara are well worth the effort. Trip reports say "What a great trip!! You get the full hit of everything in Morocco; hustlers, markets, wacky spices, beautiful mountains, great food and really friendly people make it a trip to be remembered for a long time".

### **MOUNT TOUBKAL IN WINTER**

In the winter months Toubkal can offer brilliant clear blue skies with spectacular snow covered mountains extended towards the Sahara. It is a great location to develop your winter skills, put on crampons for the first time and learn to use an ice axe. The itinerary in winter is a little different to the summer one, but we spend time during the acclimatization period developing the essential skills required. All specialist equipment can be hired.

### **Participation Statement**

Adventure Peaks 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 experience of using crampons & ice axe is required for this trip. There is sufficient time to refresh your skills before the ascent of Toubkal and the terrain is steep in places but not technically challenging. **We do require that you have experience and confidence in using ice axe and crampons on steep snow slopes.**

Most days involve around 5 - 7 hours walking plus plenty of rest stops. If you are used to regular multi day hill-walking in the UK you will have the right level of fitness to fully enjoy your time on this trek.



### 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.

### WEATHER

The weather should be pleasant during the day with cooler evenings and nights. 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 extremely cold on the early starts and in the evenings at altitude, especially in the mid-winter months.

### WHAT TO CARRY

This trek is fully supported by a team of mules and porters who will transport your main baggage. You will only need to carry a light daypack at the very most, with attachment for ice axe and crampons. 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. Please ensure that your rucksack has attachments for ice axe and crampons.

### 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.

### 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. There are no compulsory vaccinations for Morocco but the following are recommended: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Polio, Typhoid and possibly Rabies. Consult your GP or a vaccine specialist for professional advice or refer to this website: [www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk). 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 winter walking equipment is all that is required, together with a four season sleeping bag which can be hired from us. For equipment purchases Adventure Peaks 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! You must be at the group hotel in Marrakech (details given with final instructions) by 8.30pm on Day 1 for the briefing with your leader at 9.00pm.

**The rendezvous for this trip is the HOTEL IN MARRAKECH at 2030 on Day 1.**

Return flights can be booked for anytime on Day 8, or later if you wish to extend your stay in Morocco.

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

## TOUBKAL IN WINTER ITINERARY

No	Day	Today we...	We stay at...	Accommodation is...	Meals...
1	Sat	Fly	Marrakech	Hotel	
2	Sun	Sightsee, transfer and trek	Tachedirt (2300m)	Berber Lodge	BLD
3	Mon	Trek 2	Aremd (1900m)	Lodge	BLD
4	Tue	Trek 3	Neltner (3207m)	Refuge	BLD
5	Wed	Trek 4	Neltner (3207m)	Refuge	BLD
6	Thu	Trek 5 - Toubkal	Aremd (1900m)	Lodge	BLD
7	Fri	Transfer and shopping	Marrakech	Hotel	B
8	Sat	Depart	Home	Own bed!	B

**Day 1** Fly to Marrakech and take a taxi to the hotel. In the evening you might like to watch the antics in the main square, the Djemma El Fna. Rendezvous with your Moroccan guide at 9pm.

**Day 2** After breakfast we drive for an hour and a half up into the mountains to Oukaimeden, Morocco's 'premiere' ski station at 2600m. From the end of the road an easy climb takes us over the 2960m pass of Tizi n'ou Addi, which is often snow covered in the winter. On the south side of the pass a trail winds its way down and around the hillside to the village of Tachedirt, the highest in Morocco. *3 - 4 hours walking*

**Day 3** We descend the Imenene valley for an hour or so before ascending the sweeping zig-zag dirt road up to the pass of Tizi n Tamatert, where a welcome tea shop provides refreshment. Peakbaggers may like to ascend the peak of Aourirt (2724m) from the pass before continuing down past the village of Tamatert and contouring round and above the busy roadhead of Imlil to reach the village of Aremd. *4 - 6 hours walking*

**Day 4** After breakfast we ascend up the Mizane valley on the main route to Toubkal. Depending on the snow line, which changes throughout the winter and from year to year, either mules or porters will carry our bags from here. (Mules and deep snow don't mix!). We pass the shrine at Sidi Chamharouch after about an hour and a half, and then continue up the valley for a further three hours to the Neltner refuge (3207m), our home for the next three nights. *5 - 7 hours walking*

**Day 5** Today we climb Toubkal's sister peaks, the Ouanoukrim ""twins"", the second and third highest peaks in North Africa. This involves a short scramble in a couple of places as you ascend the ridge from the pass of Tizi n Ouagane. Sitting at over 4000m we will be rewarded with awesome views across to Toubkal and its neighbouring peaks. On the ascent you will be able to practice your ice axe and crampon skills as it is essential you are confident in using them for this ascent and the ascent of Toubkal tomorrow. *6 - 7 hours walking*

**Day 6** An early start is normal for the ascent of Mount Toubkal. The ascent is not technical, but does involve crossing some steep snow-covered ground which in firm conditions requires confidence and concentration. If the snow is soft and deep then it will be extremely hard going. Three to five 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 for lunch by the same route (much quicker on the way down!) and then retrace our steps down the valley the village of Aremd for our last night in the mountains. *8 - 10 hours walking*

**Day 7** 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.

**Day 8** Take a taxi to the airport to connect with your flight home.

