Moroccan High Atlas Nomadic Berber Trek

This is a unique expedition trekking through the High Atlas Mountains with a Berber family and their livestock as they make their bi-annual journey between summer and winter pastures. Please note the May departure involves bringing the livestock up into the High Atlas and the September departure involves bringing them back down. The May itinerary, apart from the first and last days runs in reverse.

Day 1: Marrakech
After a short transfer from the airport, you will have free time to explore the souks and visit the world famous Djemaa el Fna the city's main square with its snake charmers, story tellers, musicians, henna artists & fantastic food stalls. Overnight in a traditional Riad in the heart of town. (1 meal).

Day 2: Marrakech - Cascades D'Ouzoud
We start our unique expedition by travelling overland to the impressive 110m waterfalls of Ouzoud, with three levels of cascading water dropping into the river below. On arrival you will have time to hike some of the trails or paddle in one of the pools, before we proceed to camp to meet the Berber family (sheep, goats & mules too!) that we will be travelling with on their twice a year migration from the High Atlas Mountains to the Dades Valley. We overnight at Dades Gorge. (3 meals).

Days 3 - 7: Berber Migration
Breath taking mountain scenery abounds as we commence our amazing journey with our Berber family & their livestock through the beautiful Moroccan Atlas Mountains. There's no rigid itinerary here and every migration experience becomes unique as our new nomad friends know every inch of this area and choose their route according to the conditions en route. By day we trek through stunning terrain with steep passes overlooking picturesque valleys and remote Berber homesteads. If we're lucky we might get invited in for tea! By night we enjoy tasty traditional Moroccan food and time to relax under the starry skies before settling down for the night in our two-person tents. Each day sees us descend closer towards the Dades Valley until eventually we reach the beautiful Dades Gorge. The lower valleys here are where our Berber hosts will settle for the winter to escape the freezing temperatures of the High Atlas. We have one last night of camping in this serene area. (3 meals per day)
Day 8: Ait Ben Haddou
This morning we part company with our Berber companions, wish them well before continuing to Ait Ben Haddou. Ait Ben Haddou lies just below the High Atlas Mountains on the edge of the Sahara Desert, this Unesco protected red mudbrick ksar seems frozen in time, still resembling its days in the 11th century as an Almoravid caravanserai. Overnight in Ait Ben Haddou. Free time to explore Ait Ben Haddou and overnight in local hotel. (3 meals)

Day 9: Marrakech
After breakfast we load into the 4wd’s and return to Marrakech, the exciting journey takes us once again over the High Atlas, finally arriving at our hotel in Marrakech where we will have the time to relax before the evening’s festivities.

Treking Information:
Please note the May departure involves taking the livestock back up the mountain from their sheltered winter pastures and the September departure involves taking them back down to the Dades Valley. The migration will cover a distance of about 50-55 miles in total and distances covered in a day will vary between 8-12 miles, taking between 4-7 hours per day (including breaks). Generally, the highest point we will reach on the trek is about 3,100m. The terrain often involves walking along stony river beds. (Please note these timings and distances are a rough guide only and will vary according to group size, speed, weather conditions etc).

Included:
- Qualified UK Mountain Leader (groups 6+)
- Moroccan Mountain Guide
- Mules & Cook
- Meals (excluding lunch on arrival in Marrakech)
- 3 Nights Hotels / 6 Nights Camping
- Ait-Ben-Haddou guided tour
- Private Transport
- Satellite phone and VHF radio back up

Not Included:
- Tips
- International Flights
- Travel Insurance
- Personal drinks & snacks
- Meals in Marrakech

Weather & Safety
The weather during the spring months is generally sunny days and cold nights.
However, conditions can change very quickly. What can start out as a good day can soon become very poor. It is very important to be well equipped and prepared for all conditions.

Trekking in the mountains can be dangerous and although we take important steps to manage and minimise this risk we can never eradicate it altogether. The Leader reserves the right to change the itinerary at any time should the conditions require it. This may be for a variety of reasons – climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best alternative arrangements possible that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

Accommodation
In Imlil we stay in a village house/gite with basic facilities. While on the trek we will be camping.

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Health
All our guides are first aid trained and carry fully equipped medical kits for serious medical emergencies. There are no compulsory vaccinations for Morocco but we recommend you consult your GP before departure. A good level of fitness is required for this trip.

Altitude
This trip goes to high altitudes where there is a risk of being affected by Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). Our itinerary is designed to enable you to acclimatise to these altitudes, but you should be aware that it is still possible for you to be affected. The refuge is at 3206m and so whilst you may feel some initial effects of this you are unlikely to have any serious AMS issues. It is very important to drink plenty of water and maintain a good hydration leve

Passport & Visa
All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary. The information below is primarily for UK passport holders, and other nationalities should check with their relevant embassies. Adventurous Ewe is not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effect.

Dress Code
As Morocco is a Muslim country we ask that you wear suitable clothing i.e. below the knee skirts/shorts/trousers and with shoulders covered.

Insurance
It is a condition of joining this trip that you are insured against medical and personal accident. Please note that 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 as opposed to helicopter. We will require documentary evidence of your insurance prior to departure. We also recommend that you enrol with Global Rescue prior to embarking on your trip (optional). Global Rescue is the world’s premier provider of medical & security advisory and evacuation services
http://www.globalrescue.com/adventurousewe/
How to Book your Trip
The easiest way to book your trip is online via the Adventurous Ewe website at www.adventurousewe.co.uk. You will need to pay a non-refundable deposit of £100 at the time of booking.
It is possible to reserve a place on this challenge by email to info@adventurousewe.co.uk, however you will need to pay your deposit of £100 to confirm your place on this trek together with completing a booking form.
The full balance is required to be paid no less than 4 weeks prior to departure.

Total Cost
Deposit: £ 100.00 per person
Final Balance: £ 600.00 per person

If you have any further questions, please get in touch with us at info@adventurousewe.co.uk or call 01492 588069.

Testimonials

‘Highly recommended - superb unspoilt scenery, lovely trails and friendly people.
James, Berber Trek 2015

“A few shots from an amazing trip to Morocco. These images cannot really convey the beauty of this place - definitely worth a visit. What a lovely bunch of people to trek with too and great job by James Young at Adventurous Ewe for the fantastic itinerary and leadership.’
Steve, Toubkal Trek 2014
Kit List

**Clothing**
Mornings can be cold. However once the sun has risen it will soon warm up although there may well be a cooling wind on the more exposed faces and tops.

- **Base Layer** – Preferably a synthetic wicking layer with a long sleeved top and long-johns.
- **Fleece Jacket or Wind stopper**
- **Underwear** - Preferably synthetic as they dry quicker.
- **Trousers** - Fleece or synthetic / nylon or polyester. Avoid cotton they absorb moisture easily and thereby have a cooling effect.
- **Long-sleeved Top** – Light weight shirt or T-shirt.
- **T-Shirt** – Lightweight wicking T-shirts
- **Shorts** – Use for trekking and bathing.
- **Waterproofs** - Breathable waterproof jacket that has a good hood. Waterproof trousers can be of lighter weight than the top – it is recommended that they have a long/full length zip so you can put them on whilst still wearing boots/crampons.
- **Headwear** - Warm woolly hat, cap/sunhat.
- **Gloves** - A pair of thin wind stoppers (optional)
- **Socks**
- **Footwear** – Boots well-worn in and waterproof. A pair of approach/trail shoes or sandals to wear in the evenings.
- **Full Length Gaiters (optional)**
- **Sun Glasses** – These are vital. They must have strong UVA/UVB protection.

**General Equipment**
- **Kit bag** – Must be a soft bag.
- **Rucksack** - A 25 -35 litre rucksack should be sufficient for you to carry your own spare clothing, water, camera, and all personal kit required. Also a rucksack liner/dry bag – bin bags are not recommended.
- **Sleeping bag** - A good 3-4 season bag. Remember your sleeping bag liner.
- **Water bottle** - We suggest a 2 litre capacity. Platypus / Camelback systems.
- **Head torch & Spare Batteries**
- **Trekking pole(s) (Optional)**

**Miscellaneous Kit**
- **Sun screen and lip block** - SPF20 as a minimum.
- **Camera** – recharge “facility” in evening times will be limited.
- **Toiletries** - Including wet-wipes & toilet roll.
- **Passport**
- **Insurance Certificate / policy**
- **Cash** - The currency in Morocco is the Dirham. It is recommended that you take Euro, Sterling or US$ and exchange in the Moroccan airport Bureau de Change.
- **Personal First Aid** - Please bring any medication you are on plus paracetamol, brufen and some small plasters/Compeed, if you feel your feet may suffer.
Nice to Have
- Book to read, there will be lots of free time on the trek, so it's handy to have a book or playing cards
- Ear plugs for the cabins and whilst camping
- Favourite snacks, both sweet and savoury
- Something to flavour your drinking water ie. Robinson’s squash (mini 66ml size), Zero tablets etc.

Kit Hire and Purchasing
If you don’t wish to go to the expense of buying new kit, especially a suitable sleeping bag, we recommend Expedition Kit Hire [www.expeditionkithire.co.uk](http://www.expeditionkithire.co.uk) for all your kit hire requirements. Make sure you mention that you're trekking with Adventurous Ewe to gain a discount.

If you’re happy to purchase kit, Adventurous Ewe have a 15% discount code for the Cotswolds Outdoor Shop. There are stores located throughout the UK plus this code may be used online at [www.cotswoldoutdoor.com/](http://www.cotswoldoutdoor.com/).
Q&A

How big is the group?
Our minimum size group is 6 and a maximum of 12 per expedition leader

What’s the luggage allowance?
Two items of luggage are required for one trip; one large duffle type bag or back pack approximately 60-80 litres (no wheels), to contain all your trekking gear, and one smaller day pack of approximately 20 litres to carry all the personal belongings such as water proofs and snacks on trekking days. Your larger bag will be carried by the mules on the trek, and is subject to a 12kg weight limit. Ensure you have padlocks for your bags

What will the accommodation be like?
You will spend three nights in hotel accommodation which will be of a high standard with en-suite facilities. During the trek we will stay in 3 man tents on a shared twin basis. We have our own kitchen and dining tent. Toilets will be basic. If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with, please let us know in advance.

Will my valuables be safe?
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. Any valuables such as your passport and money should be kept on you at all times or kept in the hotel safe.

Who will be leading the group?
We employ experienced and fully qualified mountain expedition leaders to accompany and lead you. The mountain leaders are first aid qualified and have extensive experience in leading expeditions throughout the world. They will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group. They will be carrying full safety equipment and mountain first aid kits with them at all times. We will also have a local team of experienced guides and porters along with full back up from the Marrakech office.

How fit do I need to be?
Training and a good level of walking fitness is definitely required. Trekking multiple days requires a good level of fitness. Trekking fitness is specific to trekking but a general overall fitness is a good start. The ideal training for mountain walking is getting out there and actually walking in the hills. However, if you do not have the luxury of living in the hills or time to go out, then the stairs at home (or an office block of flats with lots of stairs) are a great place to start training. Most training should be part of an ongoing lifestyle but if this is not the case then you should begin training 4-6 months prior to the challenge and gradually build up as suggested. Step training advice is given below. Remember to use the walking boots that you will be walking in after the first month of training to get them worn in.

• Start with 3 x 20 minute steady walks weekly, increasing each month by 5 minutes.
• Walk up and down stairs, at a steady pace, until you feel comfortably out of breath. Repeat daily and increase the number of repetitions. (After the second month, you should wear a small lightly packed day sack.

There is no substitute for walking in the outdoors so try to get out on a weekend and train in an area with steep hills. You should progress to training with your boots on from week 4 at the latest but preferably from week 1. The more you exercise before the expedition, the more you will get out of it. Also see your fitness training notes.

What type of footwear should I be wearing?
The choice of walking footwear is incredibly important and should not be decided on price alone. The terrain is uneven and can be very rough so it is vital that you use a pair of strong canvas or leather boots with good ankle support, not trekking trainers, for your challenge. Not only the boots but the socks that you wear are also very important and it is worth investing in some good pairs of socks that do not blister. Wearing your boots and socks during your training period on and off the hills will inform you of whether they are suitable for the challenge.
What happens if I fall ill, can’t keep up or there is an emergency?
The expedition leader will have mobile and satellite phones that work at all times during your trek and they will also be in communication with the Marrakech office in case the emergency services need to be contacted. The trek is not a race and there can always be a large discrepancy in people’s walking abilities, which are catered for.

How many breaks will be taken during the trek and for how long?
The timing of breaks is quite liberal and there will be constant breaks for 10 minutes of every hour in order to maintain a healthy and steady pace. The exact times and places of your breaks will very much depend on the weather and the well-being of your group.

What food and drink is provided?
A typical breakfast while trekking tea/ coffee, bread, porridge and eggs. Lunch will be mainly salad, fish, cheese, bread, dinner will be served in our dining tent. We try to provide varied meals which are simple but wholesome given the limited facilities in the mountains. Typical meals consist of pasta, Tagine, Couscous and vegetables, chicken or beef. During trekking days, we recommend you bring your own favourite snacks such as chocolate, energy bars, fruit gums.

General Wellbeing
The expedition leader will always keep the group together for maximum safety on each peak and set a sensible pace for all to achieve this challenge.
Here are a few tips to remember while trekking.
- Hydration is important. Drink plenty of water
- Eat plenty to keep energy levels high
- Sunburn can be a major issue in the mountain environment, apply sun cream.
- Trekking poles are a great way to support the knees and provide stability.
- Honesty, if you feeling unwell at any point please let someone know, we want to make sure everyone remains fit and healthy whilst trekking.

Altitude & Acclimatisation
In the High Atlas the air becomes thinner the higher you go and the problem for your body is the lack of oxygen, the body has to work hard to maintain the supply. Acclimatisation is the temporary modification of your physiology to cope with the higher altitude. In simple terms your body responds in various way to needing more oxygen. The acclimatisation process can be helped by the following;
- Walk and climb slowly, breathe deeply and slowly, we will be walking slowly to enable acclimatisation.
- Walk high sleep low. Each day we will trek high and sleep low to enable good acclimatisation and a good night’s sleep.
- Drink plenty of water, good hydration is essential.
- Eat Plenty. Eat in small amounts even if not hungry.

Parts of your trip go above 3000 metres / 9200 feet where it is common for travellers to experience some adverse health effects due to the altitude - regardless of your age, gender and fitness. It even happened to Sir Edmund Hillary! Before your trip: Some pre-existing medical conditions are known to severely worsen at high altitude and be difficult to adequately treat on the ground, leading to more serious consequences. It is imperative that you discuss your pre-existing medical condition/s with your doctor. We understand certain medications are reported to aid acclimatising to high altitude. Please discuss these options with your doctor.
During your trip: While our leaders have basic first aid training and are aware of the closest medical facilities, it is very important that you are aware of the cause and effects of travelling at altitude, monitor your health and seek assistance accordingly.

Typical trekking day
We will be waking at round 06.30am, after breakfast we will have a short briefing on the day ahead, fill our water bottles and begin trekking. Everyone can trek at their own pace and there will plenty of short breaks. Lunch is normally a break of 1hr, we will be trekking between 6-8hrs a day, on arrival at camp we will have hot drinks and time to relax before our evening meal and settling down for an early night.

What is not included in the cost of the expedition?
The following items are not included in your expedition and will be at your own expense: activities not mentioned in the itinerary, flights, personal spending money, snacks, and any drinks you may want over and above what is provided. We provide treated water, but should you prefer bottled water this can be bought for approximately £1.50 per day.
What shall I do about spending money?
We recommend you bring around £60 for drinks, snacks and local staff tips. There are ATM’s and money exchanges in Marrakech and you will have the opportunity to change money before the trek.

Tipping
Tipping of the local crew is normal, a collective tip is usually organised at the end of the trek and is split between the porters, guides and cooks. We make sure are local ground operator adheres to the local recommend fair wage policies, the ground staff work very hard and any extra payment is always greatly appreciated. We recommend a tip of £20.00

Culture Shock
The comforts of home are more of a rarity. English isn't common and the food will be quite different to home. It’s important to observe some of the local customs to not cause offence. Many of the locals’ standard of living may be confronting.

What is the weather likely to be like?
Nights and early mornings are normally cool, during mid-day temperatures can average between 20-28c. During the evenings temperatures can drop to -3.

What do you do to protect the environment?
We are keeping to a small group so that we limit the impact we have on the surrounding environment. We will ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly. We follow the local guidelines on cultural and environmental Protection and respect. Also see Responsible Tourism notes.

Can you recommend any literature about the region?
Michael Palin - Sahara
Jane Johnson – The Salt Road
Jeffery Tayler – Valley of the Casbahs

For more information or to book, please contact Adventurous Ewe
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