



Toubkal Winter Trek

This trip is a 7-day winter ascent of North Africa's highest mountain. Climbing Mt Toubkal (4167m) and Qnanoukrim (4088m) is an exhilarating challenge that requires little winter mountaineering experience and rewards you with truly outstanding panoramic views of the High Atlas.

The use of crampons and ice axes is required on winter ascents although this trip is designed as a non-technical winter climb. Some winter walking experience is recommended before joining this trip but is not essential. You should however be an experienced summer walker.

Day 1: Marrakech to Imil

Arrive Marrakech and spend time exploring this amazing city and have lunch before our 1.5hr transfer by minibus to the Berber mountain village of Imilil (1700mts). We stay the night in a guest house and make final preparations for the trek.



Day 2: Acclimatisation day/Village Walk

Today is a planned acclimatisation day trekking through the Imilil valley which is home to tiny hamlets and villages of the ethnic Berbers, a herding and farming community. Our trek leads us through groves of cherry and walnut trees, making our way up Tizi Mzik 2489mt for lunch before returning to our guest house for afternoon mint tea. The evening will be spent preparing our kit for the following days.

Approx 6hrs walking



Day 3 – Acclimatisation/ Winter Skills

Early morning, we load up all equipment and food supplies and start our trek for the Neltner Refuge., slowly making our way up the Mizane valley stopping at the shrine of Sidi Chamarouch for lunch, then onto the refuge in Neltner 3208mt. If time allows we will practice some basic winter skills and a short acclimatisation walk. There will also be option to relax at the refuge for the afternoon and enjoy the stunning views. Approx 7hrs walking

Day 4 – QUANOUKRIM SUMMIT

Today is another early start as we leave the refuge early morning and continue up the Mizane valley. Our aim for today is the summit of Quanoukrim (4088m) which is the 2nd highest summit in the High Atlas. Again we will get the chance to practise more winter skills throughout the day. *Approx 9 hrs walking*



Day 5 – Toubkal Summit Day

Today we begin our trek to the summit of Mount Toubkal. The ascent starts climbing steeply as soon as we leave Neltner Refuge. We make our way up the south cwm before traversing the south ridge to the summit. Once on the summit you can enjoy the vista across the surrounding landscape which are simply quite breathtaking with unrestricted views in every direction, from the Marrakesh Plain to the High Atlas in the north and as far south as the Anti-Atlas and the Sahara. We will retrace our steps when we return down the mountain and head back to the Toubkal Refuge where we will spend the night. *Approx 8hrs Walking*



Day 6 – Neltner Refuge to Imlil

After a good breakfast we depart the refuge and start our descent to Imlil village stopping on route to enjoy the views of the Toubkal Massif. On arrival in Imlil we will transfer to Marrakech spending the evening exploring the souks and visit the Djemaa el Fna an open-air market with food stalls, snake charmers, water sellers, travelling musicians and acrobats, along with traditional Moroccan food and a cold beer. Overnight in a traditional Riad. *Approx 6 hrs walking*

Day 7 – Imlil to Marrakech

After a relaxing breakfast it's a short drive back to Marrakech. Time permitting, we can do some last minute bargain hunting before getting our flight back to the U.K.

Included in the price of the trip

- 1 Night Marrakech in Traditional Riad
- 2 Nights' accommodation in Imlil
- 3 Nights' accommodation in Neltner Refuge
- Qualified UK Mountain Leader
- Local Guide
- Cook
- Mule
- All meals in Imlil & whilst trekking

Not included in the price of the trip

- Flights to and from Morocco
- All drinks and snacks
- Meals in Marrakech
- Tipping

Weather & Safety

The weather during the winter 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.

Winter walking can be dangerous and although we take important steps to manage and minimise this risk we can never eradicate it altogether. The main danger is injury from avalanche or falling then sliding down a snow slope. Although the guides can assist you in becoming accustomed to the use of ice axes and crampons the trip is not a winter skills training course. If you have not used ice axes or crampons before it is essential that you feel confident in picking up the necessary skills.

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.

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 3160m 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 level.

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.

Accommodation

In Imlil we stay in a village house/gite with basic facilities. The Neltner refuge is reasonably basic and provides dormitory accommodation with a number of large communal rooms one of which is heated by an open fire.

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 effects.

Insurance

It is a condition of this trip that you are insured against medical and personal accident. Adventurous Ewe 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.

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 £140.00 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 £140 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: £ 150.00 per person

Final Balance: £ 350.00 per person

Trekking Experience

To complete the Toubkal Trek comfortably, it is preferable that you have previous experience of long walks in varied and irregular terrain. The walking is not dangerous or technically difficult, but you must be a confident walker with a good level of fitness in order to manage the sections of ascent and long duration of the trek, combined with carrying your backpack every day. Due to the unpredictability of the climate during the winter months, you will need to be prepared for walking in all conditions, as the weather can change extremely rapidly, making clothing and footwear choices important. Walking hours stated are given as approximates only.

Timings stated include lunch and photo stops and will vary depending on the pace of your group.

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 and lovely trails. It was beautiful.

Maria, Toubkal Trek 2017

'A few shots from an amazing trip to Patagonia. These images cannot really convey the scale and 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.'

Katrina, Toubkal Trek 2016





Toubkal Winter Trek Q&A's

How big is the group?

Our minimum size group is 10 and a maximum of 16 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 80-100 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 porters 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 two nights in Imlil, our riad will be of a high standard with en-suite facilities. During the trek we will stay in the Neltner mountain refuge. Shower and 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. It is also possible to leave items at the lodge in Imlil, although there is no safe in which to keep your valuables.

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 required. Mt Toubkal is a short but demanding trek and 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 3-6 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 20minute steady walks weekly, increasing each month by 10 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.

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 Gore-Tex or leather boots with good ankle support, crampons must also fit to your boots, the most suitable graded boots should be B1 or B2. 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 a mobile phone that works 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 the refuge. 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 ways 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 wake 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 8-12hrs a day, on arrival at the refuge 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.

You must also provide your own crampons and ice axe, these can be hired from Adventurous Ewe if booked in advance.

What shall I do about spending money?

We recommend you bring around £80 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 £20.00pp

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 10-15c During the evenings temperatures can drop to -5.

There is also the risk of heavy snowfall, should this be the case we may need to find an alternative trekking route. Trekking in mountains during the winter periods can be tough and we need to be flexible with the itinerary, however the rewards are truly immense.

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

Adventurous Ewe follow the local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect.



Winter Toubkal Trek KIT LIST

CLOTHING

Below are the items which are essential to pack for this expedition. Please note, the climate in the High Atlas is ever changing on a daily basis so please ensure you are well prepared for all weather conditions including the heat, the cold, the wet and very windy conditions. Failure to have suitable clothing may seriously jeopardise your health and safety during this challenge.

- **BASE LAYER** – 2 pairs preferably a synthetic or merino wool wicking layer with a long sleeved top and long-johns. One of these pairs can be used for sleeping while camping out.
- **FLEECE JACKET OR WIND STOPPER** - A full zip version is easier to put on and has better ventilation than a pull over style.
- **INSULATED DOWN OR PRIMALOFT JACKET WITH HOOD** – needs to fit over all insulation layers and should not be heavy or bulky. A must for the evenings and early morning. This should also fit into your day bag for use during the day should it be required. This can also double-up as a pillow at night.
- **TROUSERS** – 2 pairs of fleece or synthetic / nylon or polyester trekking trousers. Zip off trousers may be handy for the river crossing as the water levels may exceed knee height. Avoid cotton trousers as they absorb & hold moisture easily and thereby have a cooling effect.
- **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.
- **HEADWEAR** - Warm woolly hat plus a cap/sunhat.
- **GLOVES** - A pair of thin liners you can keep on the whole time if you need to. On top of this a pair of Wind Stopper gloves. Alternatively gloves that have a removable fleece liner. Mitts are also good. Work on the layering principal rather than one thick pair.
- **SOCKS** – minimum of 3 pairs of wool or synthetic trekking socks over the liner socks. Please ensure you trial your sock-wear prior to departure to ensure your sock choice is suitable for your feet.
- **FOOTWEAR** – Trekking boots with sufficient ankle support for rocky terrain. Boots should be Gore-Tex/leather type to maximise their waterproof quality. Avoid tight fitting boots and ensure your boots are well worn in prior to departure. A pair of approach/trail shoes or sandals to wear in the evenings and for the river crossing.
- **FULL LENGTH GAITERS** – which should be worn over the boot and not too tight, not light weight trekking gaiters is possible. (optional)
- **SUNGLASSES** – 100% UV, IR high optical lenses for mountain use, must have side covers or wrap around style.
- **BUFF**- Used to shade your neck and cover your mouth from dust.
- **FLIP-FLOPS / PLASTIC SHOWER SHOES** Flip-flops / plastic shower shoes (optional)

GENERAL EQUIPMENT

- **KIT BAG** – Must be a soft bag.
- **RUCKSACK** - 20 - 35 litre rucksack should be sufficient for you to carry your own spare clothing, water, camera, and all your personal kit including your lunch, snacks and water. Preferably your rucksack should have with waist belt to help distribute the weight and a whistle for safety provisions.
- **DRY-BAGS** – we recommend packing your kit inside dry bags to ensure your kit remains dry in the case of wet weather. A wet-weather cover can also be used over your rucksack but this must be securely fastened to your bag especially during high winds.
- **SLEEPING BAG** - A good 3-4 season sleeping bag as the nights can be cold especially in the refuge. You can expect temperatures of between 5 to -2 degrees celcius at night. If you wish to help keep the inside of your sleeping bag clean, bring a sleeping bag liner to sleep in plus it will add a little more warmth.
- **WATER BOTTLE** - We suggest a 2 litre capacity. Platypus / CamelBack plus a 1 litre wide mouth bottle which will make it easier to collect water from the rivers. You may wish to bring water purification tablets, but on the whole, the fast flowing glacial water does not require purification.
- **HEAD TORCH & SPARE BATTERIES** – essential to carry at all times during the trek .
- **TREKKING POLES** – Helpful for balance, carrying a heavy bag or have knee problems.
- **CAMERA** – We recommend small digital cameras however the scenery is spectacular so if you use a SLR style camera and you are happy to carry this, then Morocco is a photographer's dream location.
- **GO-PRO** – If you have a Go-Pro or similar, again this is a film-makers dream location, so feel free to bring this along as well.

MISCELLANEOUS KIT

- **SUN SCREEN AND LIP BLOCK** – SPF40 as a minimum.
- **TOILETRIES** - Including wet-wipes & hand gel. Hand gel must be used diligently at all times to help avoid any sickness being shared within the group.
- **NAPPY SACS** - For waste and rubbish. We pride ourselves in leaving no trace while travelling, so please ensure you carry all your rubbish with you including toilet tissues and dispose of it appropriately where rubbish bins are provided.
- **Lightweight towel**
- **PERSONAL FIRST AID** - Please bring any personal medication plus paracetamol, brufen and ensure you pack this in your carry-on luggage on the plane. Also bring some plasters/Compeed etc for your feet to help prevent blisters, anti-diarrhoea tablets, antiseptic cream/ointment/wipes, rehydration salts (ie. *dioralyte*), anti-histamines, throat lozenges, cough sweets and water purification tablets.
- **Contact lenses / glasses** - contact lens wearers should consider bringing glasses, as the dry air and dust plus the difficulty with cleaning, can cause problems with using contact lenses.

ADMIN PIECES

- **PASSPORT & VISA** – at the time of producing this document, UK nationals did not require a visa to enter Morocco. For all other nationalities, please check with your respective Embassy with regards to visa requirements and applications.
- **INSURANCE CERTIFICATE / POLICY & EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS**
- **PHOTO COPIES OF ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS**
- **CASH** – ATM's are available on arrival in Marrakech. UK pounds and Euro's are accepted in Morocco.

BAGGAGE AND WEIGHT

As a guide for the trek, your total baggage (day-pack + main kit bag) should weigh around 15kg inclusive. If it is less than 12kg you probably haven't got enough warm clothes. If it's more you've possibly got too much, which usually manifests itself in the form of too much toiletries, books, "medical" supplies, unnecessary snacks. We highly recommend wearing your trekking boots and hiking clothing on the plane just in case your main kit bag is delayed in reaching Marrakech.

Day packs should be between 20 litres – 35 litres to carry your clothing including water-proof jacket & trousers, water bottle / camelback provisions, packed lunch, snacks, personal medical kit, camera kit, head-torch & batteries, sunglasses, warm woolly hat and sun cap, gloves.

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
- Binoculars if you enjoy such things as bird watching or viewing the mountains at close range
- 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 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/.



15% Discount Voucher with Cotswold Outdoor



Lowe Alpine
AirZone Pro+ 35:45 Rucksack

★★★★★ 5 reviews



Mountain Equipment
Wet & Dry Kit Bag 70L

★★★★★ 257 reviews



For more information or to book, please contact Adventurous Ewe

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