



Sahara Trek Morocco



The Sahara Desert stretches from the snow-capped mountains of Morocco in the west, to the Red Sea coast 4800km to the East. Its landscape varies from a stony flat expanse to perfect windblown sand dunes, broken only by the occasional oasis. The feeling of space and of solitude is awesome. With proud Berbers as our guides and a small caravan of camels to carry our supplies we will trek through this varied and stunning landscape. The Hamada where this desert trek takes place, is in the most southern part of the Moroccan Sahara, and one of the remotest regions of Morocco.



Day 1 – U.K. to Ait-Ben-Haddou

Depart the UK early morning for our flight to Marrakech, on arrival in Marrakech we transfer to Ait Ben Haddou which takes approximately 5hrs, our transfer take us over the Tizi 'n' Tichka pass offering incredible views of the High Atlas, this is quite possibly the most scenic drive in Morocco, 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.

Day 2 – Ait-Ben-Haddou to M'hamid

After an early breakfast we have a detailed briefing and then leave for the three-hour drive via Tizi n Tinifit through the Draa Valley, the known as 'Valley of a thousand Kasbahs' we have a brief stop on route to buy a shash (native headscarf) and have our last cold drink before the heat of the desert. We continue towards Ait Atta where we make our first night's camp in M'Hamid.



DAY 3 – M'hamid– Dunes of Ait Oumir

The full colour of the landscape erupts as the sun rises. Hot coffee and a good breakfast set us up for a good day's trek. We break camp and head off across the desert, having lunch at a Palm Oasis where we may get the opportunity to meet some nomadic families. The afternoon will be spent crossing the dunes. The trekking is tough going with the Sahara stretching as far as the eye can see; we finally arrive at our camp after along dusty day of trekking. *Approx. 7hrs walking.*





Day 4 Dunes of Ait Oumir - L'erg Zaher

Leaving camp behind us after around 4km we come to the edge of some low dunes. Skirting the dunes, we walk on both soft sand and stony plateau where you can find the occasional fossilised sea creature. The hottest part of the day is spent having lunch in the shade, time to relax and refill the water bottles, once the hottest part of the day has passed we set off across more dunes alternating between volcanic rock, sandy sheets and arid plains. To the South are rolling dunes as far as you can see and to the North the Hamada, passing the occasional nomadic encampment. The nomadic people move here with their animals from the Atlas to the South in the autumn when the snows begin, we finally arrive at a L'erg Zaher the largest dunes in area, which will be our camp for the night. *Approx 6-7hrs walking*

Day 5 - L'erg Zaher - Bouguern

Waking before sunrise with our head torches on, we trek to the summit of the highest dune in area for sunrise, returning to camp for breakfast, after which we continue the day crossing the dunes with views across the desert landscape, there is very little vegetation around but we manage to find the only few trees for miles to have lunch under. Once again distances are impossible to gauge and the views shimmer in the heat before we finally make to our night's camp amongst the dunes. *Approx 6-7hrs walking*



Day 6 - Bouguern - M'hamid

Today is tough and our longest day of the entire trek as we make our way towards some of the biggest dunes in the area, firstly crossing Chwriif Plateau to have lunch near the dunes, once past the hottest part of the day we begin our traverse of the dunes. The walking is tough sand fills your boots and your feet sink into the dunes during our spectacular climb, after taking the view in we have fun descending the dunes along one of the narrow ridges to tonight's camp at the base for these spectacular dunes. *Approx 8hrs walking*

Day 7 - M'hamid - 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.

Day 8 - Marrakech - U.K.

Depart Marrakech bound for U.K. Time permitting, we will have the morning to explore the souks of Marrakech.



Included in the price of the trip

- 1 Night guest house Ait-Ben-Haddou
- Ait-Ben-Haddou guided tour
- 1 Night accommodation in Traditional Riad/Hotel in Marrakech.
- 5 nights camping
- All Transfers
- Qualified UK Leader
- Local Guide
- Camel Guides and Camels
- Satellite phone and VHF radio back up
- All meals while trekking

Not included in the price of the trip

- International Flights
- Travel Insurance
- Celebration meal in Marrakech
- Personal spending
- Tipping

Weather & Safety

Days in the desert are usually clear and sunny, and it can get very hot. Nights are colder and the temperature drops noticeably as soon as the sun sets. November - March 8 – 30°C
It is very important to be well equipped and prepared for all conditions.

Trekking in remote regions can be challenging 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.



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.

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/>

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

Hotels are of a basic 3* standard with en-suite twin rooms. While trekking we will be using 3 man tents.



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



How to Book your Trip

The easiest way to book your trip is online via the Adventurous Ewe website at <http://www.adventurousewe.co.uk/>. You will need to pay a non-refundable deposit of £150 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 £150 to confirm your place on this trek together with completing a registration and medical 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: £ 525.00 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, Morocco 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.'
Heather, Sahara Trek 2014





Kit List

Clothing

On the whole the days should be very warm; expect to wear shorts and T-shirts except perhaps for early starts or cooler evenings. It can cool down surprisingly so be prepared with some warmer clothing; down to -5c. The weather can be unpredictable you should be prepared for any sudden change in the weather.

- **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.
- **Waterproofs** - Breathable waterproof jacket that has a good hood.
- **Long-sleeved Shirt** – light weight shirt for sun and wind protection
- **Shorts** – 2 Pairs
- **Socks** – minimum 4 pairs
- **Footwear** – Boots well-worn in. A pair of approach/trail shoes or sandals to wear in the evenings.
- **Gaiters (optional)** – Good for keeping the sand out of your boots, but can also be very hot
- **Sun Glasses** – These are vital. They must have strong UVA/UVB protection.
- **Skiing Goggles** – Great eye protection in the event of a sand storm.
- **Buff** – Sun and wind protection
- **Sun Hat** – Wide brim hat or head scarf, we will have the opportunity to buy a traditional Berber scarf.

General Equipment

- **Kit bag** – Must be a soft bag.
- **Rucksack** - A 20 -30 litre rucksack should be sufficient for you to carry your own spare clothing, water, camera, sleeping bag and all personal kit required. Also a rucksack liner/dry bag – bin bags are not recommended.
- **Sleeping bag** - A good 2-3 season bag. Remember your sleeping bag liner.
- **Water bottle** - We suggest a 2 litre capacity. Platypus / Camelback systems.
- **Travel Towel**
- **Head torch & Spare Batteries**
- **Trekking pole(s) - (Optional)**

Miscellaneous Kit

- **Sun screen and lip block** - SPF20 as a minimum.
- **Camera** –
- **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 horel- 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 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.





Sahara Trek Q&A

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 60-800 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, camera and snacks on trekking days. Your larger bag will be carried by the camels 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 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 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, as this is not for the faint-hearted. The Sahara is a 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 desert 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.

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. Both Cycling and Swimming are also good alternatives.

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 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.

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 5-8hrs 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.

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 our local ground operator adheres to the local recommended fair wage policies, the ground staff work very hard and any extra payment is always greatly appreciated. We recommend a tip of £25.00pp

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 20-28c. During the evenings temperatures can drop to 0c.

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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