



Summit Morocco's highest peak

MOROCCO: MOUNT TOUBKAL TREK

9 - 13 August 2024



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Mount Toubkal

9 – 13 August 2024



Trip overview

Trek overview

This 5-day trip takes you on a journey through the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco to the highest peak in Morocco and all of North Africa, the famous Mt Toubkal at 4,167m. This trip is graded challenging and you must be at a good level of fitness by departure to ensure you have the best chance of success and the greatest enjoyment.

Morocco

Situated in North West Africa, the Kingdom of Morocco is a country with a population of over 35 million people. Morocco has a diverse geography with both Atlantic and Mediterranean coastlines in addition to a rugged mountainous and desert interior. The mighty Atlas Mountains and vast Sahara Desert makes Morocco an adventure lover's paradise, and Marrakech is a wonderful place to start your challenge with a mixture of spicy aromas, peaceful mosques, diverse entertainers and a cacophony of merchants in the bustling medina. Although the country is only separated from Europe by the straits of Gibraltar, Morocco feels like a whole world away in terms of culture, climate and scenery.

Mount Toubkal

Located in the High Atlas Mountain range a spectacular peak awaits. Jbel Toubkal is Morocco's highest peak and offers a tempting challenge to adventurous and fit trekkers. This non-technical peak, at 4,167m altitude, offers great trekking in the rugged and dramatic Toubkal National Park. The first recorded ascent of Toubkal was in 1923 although the mountain is likely to have been summited long before this by Berber tribesmen during hunting trips.

Berbers

The Berbers (or Amazighen – 'free people') are an ethnic group indigenous to North Africa whose culture can be traced back over 4,000 years. Traditionally, Berber men take care of livestock and Berber women take care of the home and make handicrafts for use around the home and to sell. The lifestyle is generally nomadic or semi-nomadic and there are large Berber communities in the rural parts of the country.



What is the experience like?

Who accompanies us?

This trek is accompanied by professional English-speaking local guides who have an excellent knowledge of trekking in the region and are first aid trained. You will also be supported a full support crew of cooks, muleteers (and mules) and a Different Travel Company UK tour manager.

How tough is it?

This trek is graded challenging. You will be camping for two nights, the summit day is tiring, the terrain is steep and you will trek for up to 8 hours a day, starting early in the morning. Although tough, this challenge is achievable for anyone with a good level of fitness who has trained appropriately. It is important that you stay positive, remember your goal, and keep your own steady constant pace. The hard work pays off after you reach the top and are greeted by spectacular views.

What is the terrain like?

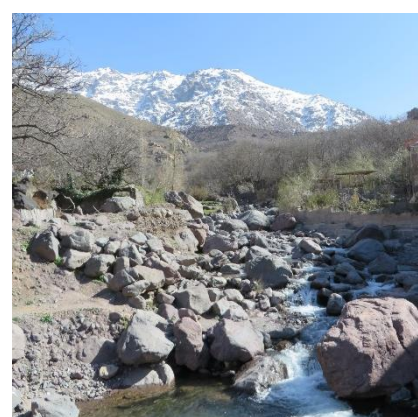
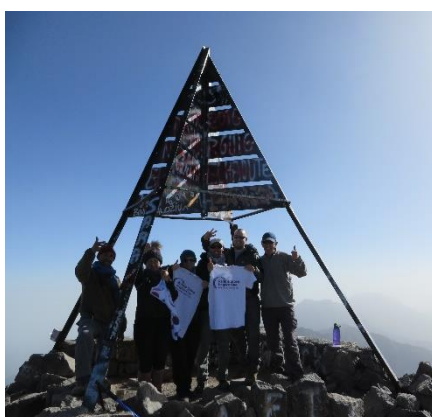
The terrain is generally very stony and dry with some sections of loose scree and small boulders you may have to scramble over. There may be snow on the ground. Towards the summit there may be exposed areas but your guides will offer you support throughout. There will be lots of uphill sections and subsequent descents, so it is very important that you have done adequate training on hills before departure.

Altitude

The summit of Toubkal is 4,167m however exposure to altitudes above 3200m (the elevation of your campsite) is limited to the trek from camp to the summit (4,167m) and back over the course of 4-6 hours. As such there is only a small chance of altitude related symptoms. See below for more details.

What is the climate like?

Temperatures in the Atlas Mountains in August can reach highs of 40°C but wind chill may make this feel colder and temperatures can drop to around 5°C after the sun sets. Some snow may remain on the higher slopes of Toubkal and if conditions require it you may need to use crampons (which can be hired in Imlil if required – approx. €5 per day). It is unlikely that snow will fall during the trek, however it is not impossible. Although the temperatures and conditions above are historically accurate, climate change can impact the seasons so you may experience uncharacteristic conditions during the trip which are out of our control. Should this happen the guide will assess the situation and make decisions to ensure the best enjoyment and ultimately the safety of the group as a whole.



Where will we stay?

You will stay in a guesthouse in Imlil for one night before the trek, camp near the refuge on the mountain for two nights and then spend the final night of the challenge in a hotel in Marrakech. While camping you will be provided with a foam mattress but you will need to bring your own sleeping bag suitable for temperatures as low as 0°C.

What about meals?

Typically breakfast comprises bread, eggs and hot drinks. Lunch will be bread, cold salad, fresh and dried fruits. Evening meals tend to begin with a hot or cold salad, followed by a tagine (a traditional fish, chicken or lamb stew with vegetables served in a clay pot) served with bread and couscous (made from semolina) accompanied by vegetables. A cup of sweet mint tea is commonly drunk to end the meal.

Practical information

Is there an age limit?

You must be 18+ to join this trek. It may be possible for you to participate if you are 16 or 17 years old if accompanied by a parent or guardian. There is no upper age limit.

Who can take part?

An ideal candidate for the trek would be someone who enjoys trekking and being out of their comfort zone, is interested in different cultures and is willing to train for the challenge. The minimum age is 18, although 16-17 year olds may register if accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

How fit do I need to be?

You should have a good level of fitness to ensure fast recovery from each day of trekking.

How should I prepare?

You must engage in training (including plenty of walking up and down hills) when you sign up to this trip to ensure your best chance of enjoyment on the trip. This could include hill walking, running, cycling, gym workouts, boot camps, etc. You can download a number of free apps to help you train and track your progress, e.g. MapMyWalk, C25K, MyFitnessPal, etc. Attempting to complete the trek without training will make it more challenging than necessary and will be detrimental to your experience, and the experience of your teammates.



Health declaration

We require a medical form to be completed by everyone upon registering, and any pre-existing conditions, medications used and other medical issues must be specified. All your medical details are treated in the strictest confidence.

The information will be securely screened by a qualified medical professional, and details provided to your tour manager and local guides so our staff are adequately informed and prepared to support you during the trip. By completing this booking form you are giving consent for us to contact you confidentially with any follow up questions regarding your health.

If you declare any medical conditions you may be asked to provide more information, or we may request to contact your GP. We must be informed if any conditions or medication change, or if new conditions develop. If necessary confirmation of fitness to travel from your GP or specialist may be required.

In the event that your medical issues represent a concern for your safety and wellbeing, or the safety and wellbeing of others in the group, you may be recommended not to take part. If this happens your deposit will be refunded. Please note that we will never unreasonably deny participation on a trip nor contravene the Equality Act 2010.

COVID-19

Your health and safety is our top priority so rest assured that we are taking steps to ensure you not only have a memorable experience, but a safe one too.

We constantly monitor and follow the advice of the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) who provide recommendations and advice to British travellers about travel to a certain destination. Health and safety is our top priority so we will **NEVER** operate a trip in an area where there is clear and present risk to our team members, whether that is due to a health outbreak, political instability, natural disasters or anything else.

If travel restrictions either in the UK or Morocco prevent safe travel we will look to either postpone or cancel your trip at no cost to you.

Please note that at the time of travel there may be enhanced safety and security measures in airports, bag drop may take longer, and you may need to provide a certificate of health or proof of vaccination.

We will inform you about any information pertinent to your travel arrangements.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us on info@different-travel.com.



Trip cost

A £345 registration fee is payable at the time of booking. You can then choose one of the three payment options:

1. **Self-funded:** Pay your own tour costs balance of £575 by 31 May 2024.
You are welcome to fundraise separately for any charity of your choice, but this is not mandatory. Any fundraising undertaken cannot be used for your trip costs.
2. **Sponsorship:** Fundraise £1,150 for your chosen charity by 17 May 2024.
This includes your £575 tour costs balance and a £575 donation to charity.
3. **Flexi:** Pay your own tour costs balance of £575 and fundraise £575 for a charity of your choice by 31 May 2024.
Any fundraising undertaken cannot be used for your trip costs.

There is also the option to extend your stay after the trek to explore more of Morocco for an additional cost.

Trip Includes:

- ✓ Return flights from London* (inc. airport taxes)
- ✓ All transfers and transport in Morocco
- ✓ All accommodation (Guesthouse, tents and hotel)
- ✓ All meals as specified in the itinerary
- ✓ Trek permits
- ✓ High-quality tents and sleeping mats
- ✓ English-speaking guides, porters and support crew
- ✓ Different Travel tour manager

Trip Does Not Include:

- ✗ Personal expenses (e.g. drinks, snacks, showers, souvenirs, etc.)
- ✗ Vaccinations
- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Tips (approx. £30 per person)
- ✗ Trek kit and equipment



Itinerary

Day 1 (Friday 9 August 2024)

London – Marrakech – Imlil (1740m)

Depart London for Marrakech. On arrival you will transfer by road to Imlil village (approx. 1.5 hours), passing green valleys and attractive scenery en-route. Imlil is the departure point for treks to Toubkal and you will stay overnight here at a traditional guest house. You can enjoy the rest of the afternoon to explore before a briefing and dinner this evening.

Meals: Lunch, dinner

Overnight: Guesthouse



Day 2 (Saturday 10 August 2024)

Imlil – Camp (3200m)

After breakfast, you will meet with the local muleteers and begin the trek to camp with a long ascent along the valley. Halfway through the trek you will reach Sidi Chamharouch (devil's king) (2350m) a small Islamic shrine believed to heal mental illnesses. Nearby there are some shops and restaurants where you will stop for lunch. After lunch you will continue your trek and will arrive at camp which is the base for the next two nights.

Trekking: Approx. 4 hours

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Overnight: Camping

Day 3 (Sunday 11 August 2024)

Camp - Toubkal Summit (4167m) - Camp

You will depart early this morning to trek to the summit of Mount Toubkal at 4,167m - the highest peak in North Africa! The ascent will take 4-6 hours and you will be rewarded with stunning views over the Atlas Mountains and even as far as the Sahara. After savouring the views and celebrating your achievement you begin your descent back to camp. The rest of the afternoon will be at your leisure allowing you the opportunity to rest.

Trekking: Approx. 6 hours

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Overnight: Camping

Day 4 (Monday 12 August 2024)

Camp - Imlil - Marrakech

This morning you will leave the camp to trek back to Imlil village where you will be met by the vehicle and driven back through the Houaz lowland to the vibrant, bustling and exotic city of Marrakech (journey approx. 1.5 hours) for a celebratory dinner and overnight stay at a hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Trekking: Approx. 4 hours

Overnight: Hotel

Day 5 (Tuesday 13 August 2024)

Marrakech - London

Some free time* this morning to explore the exotic city of Marrakech before flying back to London (*subject to flight times)

Meals: Breakfast

Notes: The day-to-day program is subject to weather, general conditions and the progress of the group. While we do not anticipate any changes to the itinerary, we cannot be held responsible for changes made due to unexpected circumstances. Ultimately the safety and health of the group takes priority in all circumstances.

Before You Go!

Important information to help you prepare for your trip

Travel practicalities and country information

Trek knowledge

Food and drink

Kit tips

Luggage

Sleeping accessories

Responsible travel and culture

Fitness, health and safety

Altitude

Kit list

Travel practicalities and country information

Visa

British passport holders do not currently require a visa to enter Morocco but you will need to complete a landing card. Travelers of other nationalities must check the entry requirements at the Moroccan Embassy. You must have at least six months validity on your passport from the date of entry. Please note that immigration queues in Marrakech airport arrivals area can lead to long delays upon arrival.

Travel insurance

The Different Travel Company will do everything possible to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip however unexpected things can occur such as delays, medical problems, baggage loss, cancellation by you etc. The purchase of travel insurance is mandatory; you are advised to organise it at the time of booking to ensure you are covered immediately. Different Travel is an Unregulated Introducer for Campbell Irvine Direct insurance policies. You can find out more here: <https://microsite.campbellirvinedirect.com/differenttravel>.

Please note: most travel insurance policies protect you before departure too so it is advised to buy insurance as close to booking as possible as it may protect you against the loss of your non-refundable, non-transferable registration fee if you cancel due to injury, illness etc.

Phone and Wi-Fi access

Morocco is served by a number of mobile networks including Orange, Maroc Telecom, Wana and Inwi. Coverage is widespread, even on the trek but your access to phone reception will vary depending on your home network, roaming capabilities, contract type and mobile handset. In general most people should have reception while in the cities and possibly during some of the trek route. Wi-Fi is available in hotels (although it may be very slow and unreliable). Please contact your phone provider to find out details about costs and remember to turn off data roaming on your phone to avoid incurring high data charges.

Religion

Islam is the established state religion of Morocco. Almost the entire population is Sunni Muslim. The monarch is the supreme Muslim authority in the country. About 1 per cent of the population is Christian, and less than 0.2 per cent is Jewish.

Tipping

While tipping is not mandatory it is recommended and greatly appreciated by your trek team and the local transfer driver. We would recommend allowing around £30 in total for tips per trekker.

Electricity

Electricity in Morocco is 220V-240V. The plugs used are European two round pin plugs. Electricity is only available at the hotels. Please bring the necessary plug adaptor, ideally one which has USB ports so you can charge multiple devices at once. Charging is not possible on the trek but if access to electricity is important to you, you are advised to bring a portable power pack (power bank or battery pack) which when fully charged allows you multiple charges of USB-powered devices such as phones. You should buy a power pack with a minimum capacity of 15,000mAh (max. 20,000mAh due to airline regulations) and these are widely available online. Solar powered chargers are usually fairly reliable for this trek due to the high possibility of sunny conditions however they do not usually store power so devices need to be plugged in while the solar panel charges.

Money

The currency of Morocco is the dirham. At the time of writing there were approx. 12.61 dirham to the pound. You must bring enough money for the entire trip with you from Marrakech as there is no ATM in Imlil.

You also need to bring money for tips (approx. £25-30), drinks and souvenirs; around £100 should suffice depending on how much you wish to buy.

Accessing cash

You cannot buy dirhams in the UK so we recommend that you withdraw cash from ATMs or exchange cash locally. There are many ATMs at the airport and in Marrakech. Please note that most banks charge for overseas withdrawals and transactions and some block cards when they are used abroad so please inform them of your travel plans before departure. You may prefer to use a prepaid currency card loaded with pounds to withdraw cash instead of using a bank card. If you prefer to exchange cash locally you are recommended to take pounds Sterling and change it to dirhams. There are bureau de changes in the arrivals area of Marrakech airport. Please note that you cannot exchange dirhams back to pounds after security in Marrakech airport. Euros and US\$ may be accepted for payment although using local currency often means a better bargain at the market! Don't change pounds to another currency and then to dirhams as you will lose out twice!

Photocopies

Remember to photocopy all your documents (insurance details, passport, credit/debit cards etc.) and take a copy with you during the trip, stored separately from the original copies. You should also scan and email these documents to yourself and leave a copy with a trusted family member or friend. If you lose any of your documents you will then have access to a copy with you and online. You may also wish to upload your documents to cloud storage such as Dropbox or Google Drive.

Photography

When taking photographs of the local people, it is polite to ask their permission first. Taking a photograph of someone without their permission, especially in rural areas, can cause offence. In contrast, taking photographs of someone you have become friendly with is usually very welcome.

Language

Arabic is Morocco's official language, spoken by about three-quarters of the population. The various Berber dialects are still spoken in rural areas but with less frequency. French is also a common second language among the urban educated classes.

Some helpful phrases in Arabic include:

Hello: As-salaamu alaykum

Welcome: Marhaban

My name is.../I am...: Ana...

Response: Wa alaykum as-salaam

Thank you: Shukran

Books

There are many good guidebooks about Morocco including the following:

Trailblazer Guides Moroccan Atlas - The Trekking Guide (Oct 2014); 978-1905864591; £14.99

Lonely Planet Morocco (August 2017); ISBN: 978-1786570321; £17.99

The High Atlas by Hamish Brown (April 2012); ISBN: 978-1852846718; £17.99.

Lonely Planet Moroccan Arabic Phrasebook (January 2008); ISBN: 978-1740591874, £4.99.

Souvenirs

Morocco provides splendid opportunities for the shopper especially for spices, tea, cook wear, carpets, decorative dinner sets, handicrafts in all types of medium, paintings and much more.

Trek Knowledge

Accommodation

You will stay in a traditional guesthouse in Imlil for one night before the trek, before camping on the mountain for two nights. You will spend the final night of the challenge in a hotel with en-suite facilities in Marrakech.

During the trek you will stay in a tent (two people per tent) near Toubkal refuge at the base of Mount Toubkal for 2 nights. Tents and a sleeping mat are provided but you will need to bring your own sleeping bag with a *comfort rating* of at least 0°C.

Hotel rooms are on a twin or triple-share basis but a single-occupancy hotel room may be possible subject to availability and payment of a single supplement.

Hygiene and bathroom facilities

There are shower facilities at the hotel and guesthouse but there are no bathing facilities at camp. It is recommended that you bring a small pack of baby wipes however, during the trek you *may* be able to use the shower at Toubkal refuge (for a fee). You should bring your own towel and environmentally friendly toiletries.

At the hotels the toilets will be Western style. There are some toilets at the Toubkal refuge which are basic, shared and mostly squat toilets that usually flush. During the trek your support crew will dig a hole in the ground near your campsite and cover with a privacy tent. You will need to bring your own toilet paper as this is not provided. If you wish to use the toilet during the days on the trail, you will need to find a bush/rock as there are no toilet facilities along the trail. NEVER leave toilet paper or other litter on the trail.

During the trek you will need to pack up any toilet paper you use in a nappy bag to dispose of properly at camp.

Difficulty

This trek is classified as challenging. There will be three consecutive days of trekking with a very early start and between 10 to 12 hours of trekking required on summit day.

Weather

The expected conditions are dry and hot days (around 27°C average, with highs of 40°C) and cold nights (down to around 5°C). As you ascend, the temperature will drop.

If snow remains on the higher slopes of Toubkal, and if conditions require it, you may need to use crampons (which can be hired in Imlil if required – approx. €5 per day). It is unlikely that snow will fall during the trek, however it is not impossible.

Although the temperatures and conditions above are historically accurate, climate change can impact the seasons, so you may experience uncharacteristic conditions during the trip which are out of our control. Should this happen the guide will assess the situation and make decisions to ensure the best enjoyment and ultimately the safety of the group as a whole.

Food and Drink

Water

All tap water in Morocco is unsafe to drink. You should only use bottled or purified water to drink, and to brush your teeth or rinse your mouth.

Bottled mineral water is provided for you but you may prefer to bring water purification so you can refill your water bottles. A highly recommended purification is 'Biox Aqua' tablets. You may also wish to consider powdered fruit juice or electrolyte tablets, as this will make the purified water taste better.

Keep hydrated

Day time temperatures can rise to over 30°C so you should consume at least 3 litres of water a day, plus soups, teas and coffees to avoid the risk of dehydration. Electrolyte tablets (for example Nuun, High5, PowerBar etc.) are flavoured effervescent tablets which contain salts, sugars and minerals which are naturally lost from your body when you sweat. By adding these tablets to your water it not only offers flavour to your water but it can help prevent dehydration before it begins. Electrolyte tablets are widely available in outdoors stores and online for around £8 for 12 tablets. You may also wish to bring a small supply of rehydration salts (for example Dioralyte) which treat dehydration.

Mint tea is commonplace in many restaurants and you may find you will drink lots of this during the trek. You are provided with bottled mineral water during the trip. Bottled water and soft drinks may be available to buy along the way.

Water Bottle

You will need to bring your own bottles to carry at least three litres of water per day. Some people will bring a 2-3 litre CamelBak hydration system (for effortless access to water while you trek) plus one 1-litre water bottles (for example plastic Nalgene or metal Sigg bottle). Some people prefer to bring three 1-litre bottles. The choice is yours. If you're bringing a CamelBak hydration system, a separate 1-litre bottle is essential as it can be used as a backup if your hydration system fails.

Please write your name on all your bottles in marker pen. Please note that 'own brand' and cheap hydration systems are notorious for splitting, leaking or valves not functioning properly. CamelBak and Platypus are the leader in this market because their products are significantly better quality and more reliable.

Dietary requirements

The majority of special diets, such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, etc., can be catered for if we are notified in advance. Please ensure that you notify us of any dietary requirements at the time of booking or as soon as possible. Please note that we cannot guarantee that food preparation will have taken place in a contamination free environment.

Food

Meals are provided throughout and are freshly prepared by the trek chef. A mess tent with tables, chairs, plates, mugs and cutlery is provided. Typically breakfast comprises of bread, pancakes, jams, soft cheese and hot drinks. Lunch will be bread, cold salad, fresh and dried fruits. Evening meals tend to begin with a hot or cold salad, followed by a tagine (a traditional fish, chicken or lamb stew with vegetables served in a clay pot) served with bread and couscous (made from semolina) accompanied by vegetables.

Snacks

You may wish to bring a selection of snacks for energy, a pick-me-up or a little taste of home. Please bring snacks you have tried before (and enjoy!) so they are appetising to you. Items such as sweets, individually wrapped cake bars, protein bars and dried fruit are ideal but don't forget to bring savoury treats also such as salted nuts, Cheddar biscuits or salted crackers.

Kit tips

Discount

When you book you will receive a discount and vouchers booklet. Please check the documents section of your online profile.

Footwear

You need to wear hiking boots during the trek; walking trainers are unsuitable. It is important that your boots are waterproof (for example Gore-Tex or eVent), have good ankle support and a good quality sole (for example Vibram). You are recommended to try on lots of pairs at a specialist outdoors store such as Cotswold where the staff can advise you on the correct boot and fit for you. Do not leave it to the last minute to purchase hiking boots as you need time to break them in. You should wear your boots on the plane, or carry them in hand baggage, in case there are baggage problems or delays.

Trek clothing

You are recommended to invest in good quality trekking gear which can be worn in layers (base layer, warm layer, shell layer) which can be added and removed easily to manage your temperature and the climate. Your clothes should be made of technical fabrics designed to wick sweat away from your body which keep clothes dry and smelling fresh. Merino wool, nylon, polyester, polypropylene and bamboo fabrics are all effective technical fabrics. Never bring cotton clothing to trek in. Cotton clothing can be hazardous to wear in cool conditions because when sweat is absorbed by cotton fibres (rather than forced to evaporate as with technical fabrics), it leaves clothes damp. Damp clothes make you cold and uncomfortable and could even leave you vulnerable to hypothermia on a cold day. You can find good quality technical clothing in all reputable outdoors stores. Check the garment label to ensure your garments contain 0% cotton. Good quality Gore-Tex waterproofs are very important in case there are showers or high winds. Most people will trek in the same outfit for the duration of the trip and have one or two spares in their kit bag.

Socks

It is important that the socks you choose are high quality, non-cotton and will not slip down in your boots which causes blisters. Never wear cotton socks which absorb sweat making them damp and more likely to rub against your feet, causing blisters. Socks containing Coolmax (a brand of polyester) or nylon have wicking properties which means that it pulls sweat away from the skin for it to evaporate. Good brands to consider include Bridgedale, Smartwool and Brasher.

Gloves

You should take a pair of gloves or mittens with you as high winds can be very chilly during the trek.

Hiking poles

Hiking poles can be very useful on steep ascents and descents, particularly when carrying a heavy pack on uneven terrain. Poles are also very useful for stability. They are not mandatory but are recommended. You should use them on your training walks to familiarise yourself on how to use them. If you bring hiking poles they must fit inside your suitcase/kitbag for the purposes of the international flight.

Sunglasses

These are important even on overcast days. They must offer a minimum of 100% UV protection, and polarised sunglasses are ideal. Taking a spare pair is recommended.

Headtorch

This is a vital piece of kit. Petzl is one brand which makes good quality headlamps but there are many head torches available from other companies. Please ensure you take an LED torch as ones with bulbs are not bright enough. Bring your head torch with fresh batteries inside it, and take a full set of spare batteries. Do not bring a wind-up head torch as these are unreliable.

Cobber neck cooling wrap

A highly recommended accessory for the trek is a body cooling neck wrap known as a 'Cobber'. When this neck wrap is submerged in water for 30 minutes the poly-crystals absorb it making them swell and turn cold. You wear it around your neck and it cools the blood flowing through your carotid arteries and keeps your body temperature down. One 30 minute submersion in water keeps the crystals cool and moist for 3 days before they start to dry out; perfect for your time in the desert. They can be purchased for less than £10 from eBay or Amazon.

Headwear

A hat with a wide brim is essential or you could buy a local headscarf called a cheche (available to purchase en-route to the desert). You may wish to consider bringing a Buff – a useful multifunctional headwear item (see buffwear.co.uk or similar products).

Luggage

You will need the following luggage items:

1. A daypack

You are responsible for carrying your own daypack containing essentials for each day. We recommend you bring a 25-30 litre rucksack which **must** have a hip belt and a chest strap. High quality brands to consider when looking for a suitable pack include Osprey, Berghaus and Lowe Alpine (amongst others) and you are strongly advised to visit a reputable store like Cotswold to have your backpack fitted, as they come in a variety of sizes, and some brands offer male and female specific fits.

You can expect to carry your personal first aid kit, warm layer, sun cream, packed lunch, three litres of water, snacks, waterproofs, toilet paper, wet wipes and camera.

It could weigh 6-8kg when packed, so you should make your backpack selection carefully and ensure it fits correctly and is comfortable. You will not have access to your main luggage while trekking.

2. A dry bag/rucksack liner

You are advised to use a lightweight waterproof rucksack liner or dry bag (for example Exped dry bag) inside your daypack to keep your belongings dry in rainy conditions. It should be large enough to fit inside your entire backpack. Rucksack covers alone are ineffective at keeping your kit dry in wet conditions, and can often blow away in the wind.

3. A soft-sided kit bag or large rucksack

This is to hold your trek luggage which will be carried by mules. It will contain the items you need for the evenings and mornings (for example toiletries, change of clothes, sleeping bag etc.). The weight limit is strictly **8kg**. The kit bag must be strong, light and waterproof.

Some *examples* of kit bags include Mountain Equipment wet and dry bag or the North Face Base Camp duffle bag but there are many brands and models available in outdoors stores for various prices. A large rucksack with your gear packed inside a lightweight waterproof rucksack liner is suitable too. The capacity of your kitbag should be around 55-60 litres but as long as all your gear fits and is within the weight limit it doesn't matter if the size differs. Please do not bring a solid suitcase or holdall with wheels as this is not suitable for the trek.

4. A small suitcase to hold your luggage (including your empty trek kit bag) for the flight. This can be left securely in Imlil with anything not required for the trek (e.g. toiletries, hair straighteners etc.).

5. Combination padlocks which should be used to secure your bag during your flights and also to keep zips secure on your kitbag during the trek.

Sleeping accessories

Sleeping bag

You should bring a sleeping bag which should have a comfort rating of 0°C or lower. You will not carry your sleeping bag yourself during the trek. Please note that a sleeping bag comfort rating is NOT the same as the extreme rating. The European standard for sleeping bags measures four temperature ratings:

- Comfort — the temperature at which a standard woman can expect to sleep comfortably in a relaxed position.
- Lower Limit — the temperature at which a standard man can sleep for eight hours in a curled position without waking.
- Extreme — the minimum temperature at which a standard woman can remain for six hours without risk of death from hypothermia.

Sleeping bags with a comfort of 0°C -3°C include:

Snugpak Tactical 2 (comfort 0°C, £129.95);

Snugpak Softie 6 Twilight (comfort 0°C £114.95);

Snugpak 'The Sleeping Bag' (comfort -2°C, £34.95);

Snugpak Travelpak 3 (comfort -3°C, £54.95); Snugpak 'The Navigator' (comfort -2°C, £34.95);

Robens Caucasus 600 (comfort 0°C £160); Ayacucho Sirius 200 (comfort 0°C £80); Women's Starlight II Regular (comfort -2°C £100)

Mountain Hardwear Lamina 20 (comfort -2°C £135);

Haglofs Slumber 2S (comfort 0° C, lower limit -5° C, £110)

Please note: that the temperature guidance is based on historical averages at this time of year and we cannot be held responsible if the weather conditions are different than expected.

Sleeping bag liner

A silk sleeping bag liner is recommended to complement your sleeping bag as it adds an extra layer of insulation to keep you warm if it's cool. If it's too warm you can sleep under your sleeping bag liner with your sleeping bag unzipped. A sleeping bag liner also protects your sleeping bag from dirt, sweat and damage. Silk sleeping bag liners are quite expensive if purchased on the high street, so consider eBay where you can purchase directly from the manufacturers (usually Vietnam or China) at a fraction of the price. Make sure you look out for 'pure silk' sleeping bag liners, not 'satin' (which is usually low quality and synthetic).

Responsible Travel and Culture

Culture shock

Geographically Morocco is not far from Europe but some commonplace cultural differences can cause shock to the visitor. Haggling in the market place is expected, and prices are often twice as expensive as they are worth! In the market place you may be approached by people trying to get you to enter their shop to look around. If you are not interested, a firm 'no' should ensure you are left alone. Being a Muslim nation, alcohol is not widely available at cafés, restaurants or hotels in Morocco.

Dress respectfully

Morocco is a traditional nation, clearly reflected in their dress. In Marrakech the local people are familiar with seeing foreigners but it is respectful to pay attention to what you wear to avoid causing offence or attracting unwanted attention. Legs and shoulders are considered 'private body parts' in most parts of Morocco and men and women should do their best to keep these areas covered.

Begging and poverty

Although you may not come into contact with many instances of this, you may come across beggars and homeless people which can be distressing. It is important not to underestimate the psychological impact of viewing poverty, and a sense of helplessness and guilt that often comes from it. Some people respond by feeling they must do everything they can to help everyone. The risk is that it leads to disappointment and disillusionment as no one person can do everything. The secret is to recognise the signs (raised levels of stress, feeling emotional, guilty, frustrated and angry), and to set realistic goals about what you can and cannot do.

We also recommend that you avoid acting on impulse – especially when it comes to giving away money. People may seem genuine, but very many people still regard tourists as 'cash cows' and act dishonestly and unethically. Do check with your guides before giving money.

Haggling

When shopping for gifts in market places where there are no price tags on items it is expected that you will haggle. The first price is sometimes twice the value of the item, but remember that you should engage with the vendor to encourage rapport before haggling then only pay what you think is a good price for the item, not trying to get the price as low as possible.

Environment

We are environmentally conscious and aim to minimise our impact as much as possible:

- Never leave toilet paper or litter on the trail.
- Don't dispose of fruit peel, cores or seeds on the ground; although they decompose eventually they are unsightly and may attract animals.
- Turn off lights when not in rooms.
- Minimise your water usage by having short showers.

Etiquette

- Be considerate of other trekkers.
- Always endeavour to be polite and respectful. If you show respect then it will be reciprocated.
- At accommodation, particularly guesthouses, keeping noise to a minimum, especially early in the morning and late at night.
- Be respectful to your guides and hosts; don't forget to say please and thank you.
- Be considerate of the feelings of other group members.
- When taking photographs of the local people, it would be wisest to ask their permission. Taking a photograph of someone without their permission, especially in rural areas, can cause offence. Older people, particularly ladies prefer not to be photographed but in contrast young children are often very keen to be photographed.

Animal welfare

Pack mules will carry your gear to camp for you and there are several things you can do as a traveller to ensure the welfare of the mules. The maximum weight limit for a pack mule is 50kg and as the saddle weighs around 20kg in itself we ask you to pack as lightly as possible, ideally 8kg kit bag per trekker; with absolutely no more than a 10kg, which is a very generous kit allowance. Ensure your tip to the local staff includes a proportion to go to the muleteer for the mule's care and food provisions. If you wish to offer a further tip for the mule's care, this is to your discretion.

Fitness, health and safety

Vaccinations and travel health

Different Travel regrets that we cannot provide medical advice or recommendations. You are advised to seek medical advice at least 8 weeks before travelling to ensure that all appropriate vaccinations are up to date. For general information visit www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk or www.travelhealthpro.org.uk but your GP or travel health professional should be the first stop for a consultation tailored to your medical history. Please note that failure to be adequately vaccinated, or take necessary prophylactic medication can invalidate travel insurance policies as it is considered that you have not taken necessary precautions.

Asthma

If you suffer from asthma, there are some important things to consider when preparing for this trek. Please visit your GP, and read the website of Asthma UK for advice and support.

<http://www.asthma.org.uk/knowledge-bank-living-with-asthma-high-altitude>

First Aid kit

You should bring a small first aid kit of essential items which is for your own personal use and keep it in your backpack. Suggested items to include: personal prescription medicine, painkillers, blister plasters, insect repellent (50% DEET), throat lozenges for Khumbu cough, decongestant for the dust, anti-histamine tablets, Loperamide (e.g. Imodium), lip balm with SPF, indigestion remedy for unfamiliar food, muscle rub, zinc oxide tape etc. Please keep the contents to a minimum as you must carry it yourself. Please note that there are pharmacies in Namche however you may not find your preferred brand of medication available to buy, or it could be very expensive.

Insect repellent

There are many mosquitoes in Morocco so you are recommended to bring repellent with you. DEET is the most effective repellent available. The Department of Health recommends 50% is the maximum that you should use on your skin (never bring 100% DEET to use on your skin). DEET can melt plastic, stain clothes and remove dye so be careful when using any DEET product.

Fitness training

You should start training when you sign up for the trip. The best form of training for a trek is get outside and start walking. If you're not a regular walker, start slowly with short distances then as you get more comfortable, increase your mileage and add in more challenging terrain until you can comfortably walk for several consecutive days, for around 8 hours at a time, on hilly terrain while maintaining a comfortable pace without needing to stop more than frequently than once an hour for a 5-minute rest.

Hill walking while carrying a fully packed backpack while wearing your hiking boots should feature predominantly in your training as this will help prepare your body for the terrain and baggage load you will experience during the trek.

Other activities which can complement hill walking include running, cycling, gym workouts and boot camps etc. Developing your core and leg muscle strength is also important so exercises such as squats, lunges, push-ups, planks and crunches will really enhance your training. These exercises can be done at home; no gym needed.

You can download a number of free apps, which will help you train and track your progress, for example MapMyWalk, C25K (couch to 5k run), MyFitnessPal.

Please note that attempting to complete the trek without any training may make the experience unnecessarily difficult and hinder your experience, and also the experience of your teammates.

The trek does not require technical climbing skills but it is still a tough trek so it is important to **take your training seriously and arrive in Morocco as fit as you can be**. The local guides, in consultation with your Different Travel tour manager, may advise that if you are not fit enough to continue that you leave the trek.

Zinc-oxide tape

This tape is really useful to prevent blisters. When you feel your boots start to rub against your feet, you should stop and remove any debris from your boots and check your feet. If a hot spot is developing (a red, sore area without broken skin) you can apply zinc oxide tape to the area and it will stop (or slow down) a blister developing. If you are too late to prevent the blister, you should clean the area and apply a Compeed blister plaster instead.

Safety

Please take common-sense precautions while travelling to ensure your safety and the protection of your belongings. For example: leave flashy jewellery, watches and accessories at home; keep wallets out of sight stowed in a handbag or backpack rather than sticking out of a pocket; don't leave bags unattended at any time; carry cameras in their cases rather than carrying them openly with the camera strap; split cash into different pockets rather than carrying all your money in one place, especially immediately after you have used the ATM; and so on.

Emergency and evacuations

In the unlikely event of a serious illness or accident, the local team will ensure you are transferred as swiftly as possible to the nearest hospital. Please ensure your travel insurance covers you for airlifting/emergency evacuations as this can be required to reach casualties on more remote trails in an emergency. You are recommended to bring a credit card during the trip if you need to pay for medical treatment upfront in the event of an emergency.

Altitude

For most of the trip you will be exposed to a maximum altitude of 3200m (at the campsite) however, to reach the summit you will have to trek up to 4,167m. As symptoms are possible from approximately 3000m, there is a small chance of altitude related symptoms during the trek. Your local guide will be experienced in spotting signs of altitude sickness but it is important that you do your own research so you can be aware of how your body is adjusting.

Common mild symptoms of altitude exposure include headaches, nausea, a loss of appetite, disturbed sleep and fatigue. These generally subside after a few days once your body acclimatises to the altitude. It is vital that you make your guides and tour manager aware of any symptoms immediately so you can be monitored. Experiencing symptoms of altitude exposure does not automatically mean you will not be permitted to continue the trek.

Important info about altitude:

- If you begin to show symptoms of altitude exposure, let your tour manager and guide know so they can monitor your health.
- If symptoms get worse, you may be asked to descend immediately. Your tour guide and tour manager's decision for you to descend must be respected.
- Different people acclimatise at different rates. You must keep aware of your own symptoms.
- Stay well hydrated. You need to drink lots of fluids to remain properly hydrated (at least three litres per day from water, soup, tea, juices etc.). Urine output should be copious and clear to pale yellow.
- Take it easy and don't overexert yourself when you first arrive at altitude.
- Avoid tobacco, alcohol and other depressant drugs including tranquillisers, sleeping pills and opiates such as codeine. These decrease the respiratory drive during sleep resulting in a worsening of symptoms.
- Eat a high calorie diet while at altitude, snacking constantly throughout the day.
- Acclimatisation is inhibited by overexertion, dehydration and alcohol.

When you visit your GP for details about vaccinations and general travel health, your doctor may discuss a medication called Acetazolamide (Diamox) which is sometimes considered to aid acclimatisation. This medication is not licensed for use to aid acclimatisation as the evidence about its efficacy is unclear. Diamox is a prescription-only medication in the UK and has a number of side effects. You must speak to your GP for full details but note that as an unlicensed medication they may not wish to prescribe it to you.

A great source of information can be found at <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Altitude-sickness/Pages/Introduction.aspx> and <http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk/altitude.htm>.

Last updated January 2023

KIT LIST - MT TOUBKAL

The kit you take on your trek can make the difference between being 'just a trek' or a 'memorable trek'.

Our kit lists are put together with feedback from our own experiences and that of participants who have taken part in our previous trips.

The items on this list do not take into account your personal preferences based on your previous trekking experiences, or individual requirements.

PLEASE NOTE: This list is just a guideline and is not exhaustive or take into account personal preferences.

For information about items on this list please refer to the trip dossier or contact The Different Travel Company on info@different-travel.com

*Please consider eco-friendly or biodegradable options.

ESSENTIAL

SUGGESTED

OPTIONAL

DOCUMENTS + FLIGHT ESSENTIALS	✓
Passport and Copy	ESSENTIAL
E-Tickets	ESSENTIAL
Travel insurance	ESSENTIAL
ATM and credit card (s)	ESSENTIAL
Cash (£ Sterling)	ESSENTIAL
Pen for immigration forms	ESSENTIAL
Sunglasses (preferably polarized)	ESSENTIAL
Mobile phone + charger	ESSENTIAL
Camera + spare batteries	SUGGESTED

LUGGAGE	✓
Suitcase/large holdall	ESSENTIAL
Daypack (25 – 30 litres)	ESSENTIAL
Hand Luggage (take note of dimensions from airline)	ESSENTIAL
Combination padlocks	ESSENTIAL

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR	✓
Trekking boots: either worn on flight or carried in hand luggage	ESSENTIAL
Flip flops/trainers for guesthouse	ESSENTIAL
Lightweight trek trousers (zip off trousers ideal)	ESSENTIAL
Non-cotton, technical t-shirts	ESSENTIAL
Non-cotton long sleeved top/shirt	ESSENTIAL
Trek socks	ESSENTIAL
Underwear	ESSENTIAL
Long sleeved light warm layer	ESSENTIAL
Change of clothes for evenings	ESSENTIAL
Light poncho/waterproof jacket	ESSENTIAL
Sun hat with brim	ESSENTIAL
Neck cooling 'Cobber' or cooling towel	SUGGESTED
Buff (www.buffwear.co.uk)	SUGGESTED

HEALTH AND HYGIENE*	✓
Hygiene kit to include: toothbrush and toothpaste, antiperspirant deodorant, wet wipes, shampoo, conditioner	ESSENTIAL
Personal first aid kit to include: prescription medicine, insect repellent, ibuprofen, paracetamol, plasters, blister plasters (e.g. Compeed), Imodium, rehydration salts (Dioralyte), antiseptic cream (e.g. Savlon), Anti-histamine cream/tablets, lip balm with SPF protection, zinc oxide tape, nail scissors/tweezers, muscle rub (e.g. Deep Heat)	ESSENTIAL
Hairbrush/comb	ESSENTIAL
Lateral flow tests (min x2)	ESSENTIAL
Disposable masks	ESSENTIAL
Feminine care products	SUGGESTED

OTHER KIT	✓
Sleeping bag (comfort 0°C)	ESSENTIAL
Sleeping bag liner (cotton/silk)	ESSENTIAL
Sun block (high SPF)	ESSENTIAL
Toilet bag: toilet paper, wipes, hand sanitiser, nappy sacks	ESSENTIAL
2 ltr water hydration system (e.g. Camelbak)	ESSENTIAL
1 ltr bottle of water	ESSENTIAL
LED head torch + spare batteries	ESSENTIAL
Adaptor (European 2 round pin)	ESSENTIAL
Ear plugs	ESSENTIAL
Casual shoes for Marrakech	ESSENTIAL
Casual clothing for Marrakech	ESSENTIAL
Hiking poles – to be stowed in hold luggage for flight	SUGGESTED
Energy food/snack bars	SUGGESTED
Swimwear for hotel	OPTIONAL
Bags for dirty washing	OPTIONAL
Spare glasses/contact lenses	OPTIONAL
Video camera + charger	OPTIONAL
MP3 player/ipod	OPTIONAL
Portable power bank	OPTIONAL
Books/packs of cards	OPTIONAL
Travel pillow	OPTIONAL