

Toubkal Winter Climb



Duration: 7 days

Mount Toubkal, at 4167m, is the highest peak in the stunning High Atlas Mountains, and in North Africa. A demanding trek in summer, in winter conditions the challenge increases a few notches.

This is a tough winter trek at altitude, but the sense of achievement more than compensates for our efforts – as do the views from the summit, over the surrounding magnificent icy peaks glistening in the sunlight, and across to the Sahara Desert.

We maximise our time to include a trek to the high pass of Tizi Ouanoums, and break our descent to the valley in a small Berber village, with the opportunity to relax our aching muscles at the local hammam (Turkish baths). Time in colourful Marrakech offers yet more variety, and a real cultural contrast!

This trek is achievable for most provided they train well, have a good level of fitness and determination, and do not underestimate the challenge. Technical winter experience is not required; we make time to practice with crampons and ice axes before the ascent.

We also offer this trek in the warmer months - check out our [Mount Toubkal Trek](#).

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly London to Marrakech

On arrival we transfer the short distance to our hotel, then have a trip briefing before a good night's rest! Night hotel.

(Dinner not included)

Day 2: Marrakech – Imlil – Aremd

After an early breakfast we load up and drive into the mountains to the photogenic village of Imlil (1740m), where we meet our guides and mules, and set off! Our route takes us uphill through walnut groves to the small Berber village of Aremd, lying in the foothills. Aremd is the largest village in the valley, built on a moraine spur overlooking the valley floor. This afternoon we have the chance to orientate ourselves with a walk around the village, taking in the mountain landscape, dotted with terraced farms and traditional gites. Night village stay.

Trek approx. 2-3 hours; height gain 210m

Day 3: Aremd – Toubkal Refuge From Aremd, we follow the winding Mizane valley into remote mountains; the views are magical, especially in snowy conditions. We ascend gradually to the tiny hamlet of Sidi Chamharouch (2200m), built around a Muslim shrine, a place of pilgrimage renowned for its healing powers. As we zig-zag more steeply, the scenery changes gradually to alpine landscapes, with new views unfolding at every turn; the high snow-covered peaks are daunting and exciting all at the same time! We arrive at our mountain refuge, at Toubkal's base, and spend the afternoon on a short walk around the surrounding area, getting a feel for the conditions and learning how to use our crampons and ice axes with our guides. Night refuge (3200m).

Trek approx. 5 - 7 hours; height gain 1250m

Day 4: Toubkal Summit

Our summit beckons: Mount Toubkal, the highest peak in North Africa at 4167m. We rise early, to allow plenty of time for our ascent. We trek along snowy boulder-strewn tracks, twisting our way up the mountain. We admire the early morning sun illuminating the spectacular snowy landscapes around us as we ascend. We gain altitude steadily as we climb up slowly through a hanging valley with dramatic landscapes all around us; there are some steep sections here. We eventually come to a col with fabulous views; in good conditions we can see the Sahara Desert from here. We can also see the last section of the climb ahead of us, with tantalising views of the summit. This last hour is tough as we follow a snowy ridge, but then we are standing at the summit – a real achievement. We have enough time to savour the sensation of being on top of North Africa's highest summit, before we descend the same way, zig-zagging quite steeply and then crossing the large rocks and boulders of the lower section. We can see the refuge from quite high up, and feel euphoric as we return to it. We have time to relax with a mint tea, enjoying the views, and the money-can't-buy sense of achievement. Night refuge (3200m).

Trek approx. 6-8 hours; height gain / loss 967m

Day 5: Toubkal Refuge– Aremd

After a good night's rest, we head out to Tizi Ouanoums, a high pass further up the valley, where after the last section of steep zig-zagging, we're rewarded with stunning views of Ifni Lake, created by a large moraine south of Toubkal. Once again, we can marvel at views of the surrounding peaks, and across to the Sahara Desert in good weather. This afternoon we head back down to Aremd, where we enjoy another night in the village before we leave these mountain landscapes behind. There should be time for a visit to the local hammam; the chance to rest weary muscles after the exertions of the past few days is usually a real highlight! Night village stay.

Trek approx 7hrs; height gain 400m / loss 960m

Day 6: Aremd Refuge – Imlil – Marrakech

After breakfast we trek downhill, back to Imlil, admiring the landscapes and enjoying warmer temperatures. Our legs are tired and we take it easy, but the trail should feel much easier than it did on the way up! On arrival in the village we have lunch, then meet our transport and head back to the buzzing city of Marrakech. We have time to explore the fascinating Jma El Fnaa, the main square, with its food stalls, snake charmers and musicians, and haggle for souvenirs in the fascinating souks – a real contrast to our remote mountain paths and a memorable way to end our adventure! We meet again in the evening for a slap-up dinner to celebrate our achievements. Night hotel.

Trek approx. 1-2 hours; height loss 200m; drive approx 2 hours

Day 7: Fly Marrakech to London

Transfer to the airport for our flight back to London. *(Lunch not included)*

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All transport from London to Marrakech return
- All meals except where specified & accommodation
- Discover Adventure leaders; doctor with group of 15 or more participants; local guides & cooks, mules, muleteers and drivers
- Winter equipment provided: crampons and ice-axes
- Vehicle support and back-up equipment
- Entry to any sites visited as part of the itinerary
- Airline taxes

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Sleeping bag
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Tips for the local guides and support crew
- Inbound airport departure tax (no tax applied at the time of writing)
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

Trip Doctor

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any medical incidents. They help the crew to ensure the trip runs smoothly, and encourage you when things get tough. The total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Not all support crew will speak English well, but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in many countries may be less than you would spend on an average night out.

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Altitude

Altitude adds to the challenge, and affects people differently. Most travellers experience no more than headaches and shortness of breath (typical symptoms of being at altitude, and not usually a concern.)

Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) or 'altitude sickness' occurs when you ascend to high altitude quickly. The best way to avoid it is to allow time for the body to adjust - our itineraries are designed with this in mind - and to walk at a slow pace (which our leaders will set). We also recommend avoiding alcohol and smoking. Problems usually begin at heights of around 3500m - 4500m. More severe symptoms are usually quickly remedied by descending to a lower altitude and taking more time to acclimatise.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick on scheduled airlines and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your journey may involve a transit en route; details of route and flight times will be confirmed several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination; if you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Accommodation

Accommodation is in village houses and refuges (simple but comfortable mountain lodges) when trekking, and a hotel in Marrakech. The hotel is comfortable with private, twin-share facilities. Mountain refuges are clean and comfortable considering their remote location; sleeping arrangements are dormitory-style.

Roomshare Arrangements

Some accommodation will be twin-share. Please tell us if you know somebody else on the trip that you would like to share with and we will try our best to accommodate your request. If you don't know anyone else in the group don't worry, we always pair you up with someone of the same gender, and a similar age where possible. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

On some nights we are likely to sleep in more communal accommodation such as dormitories/hostels, huts, local homestays or monasteries, depending on the trip, and you may be sharing with a larger number of participants or the whole group; this type of accommodation cannot always be single-sex.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas, or among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's

limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you with all necessary information 6 weeks prior to departure to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check [Fit For Travel](#) for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Travel Insurance

This challenge requires mountaineering insurance cover, as you will be using **ice axes** and **crampons**. You are able to purchase suitable insurance cover via [The British Mountaineering Council](#).

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click [here](#).

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency

phone number provided by your insurers.

Cultural Differences

For most people, the main attraction of travelling to a different country is to see new sights and enjoy new experiences. Sometimes those new experiences can make life harder or more inconvenient than you may like, such as toilet hygiene or different food, or simply a different attitude to solving problems. This is all part of the challenge you are signing up for! We are very privileged to live in a country with a high standard of living, and travelling exposes us to different challenges – all of which help broaden our horizons. We can guarantee that coming face-to-face with experiences outside your normal 'comfort zone' will help you bond with your fellow participants and provide you with plenty of things to laugh about! A sense of humour and sense of adventure are two of the most important things to bring with you!

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by post or email. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration fees and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).

CHALLENGE EXTENSIONS



DISCOVER MARRAKECH (FROM MARRAKECH)

Stay in a beautiful historic riad, an ornately-decorated traditional Moroccan house set around a courtyard garden, in vibrant Marrakech. A haven of calm amidst the old city, your riad offers a perfect place to relax and soak up the sunshine from its rooftop terrace, while only being a stone's throw from the bustle of the souks.

The souks are crammed with fascinating sights, and you can haggle for everything from leather goods and shoes to spices and argan oil. Soak up the buzz in the Jma el Fnaa, Marrakech's huge main square, with its food-stalls, musicians, street-performers and snake-charmers, or just sit back in one of the many cafes and enjoy the cultural flavour. A guided city tour is included to get you started – then explore and shop to your heart's content!

This extension does not have an organised itinerary. You are free to spend your time as you wish.

Min 2 pax

Contact the office for pricing and availability.



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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 18 May 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.