

Berber Trails



Duration: 5 days

A swathe of green pastures in the reddish rocky foothills of the High Atlas Mountains, Ait Bougmez is the longest valley in Morocco and strikingly beautiful. Nicknamed the Happy Valley for good reason, its mud-brick villages and patchwork of cultivated barley fields are surrounded by soaring peaks. Streams tumbling down from the high massif sustain the crops and fruit trees – a rare sight in these barren landscapes.

This secluded region is only just starting to become known to trekkers; we explore the valleys and mountain ridges on old mule paths used by farmers and nomads herding goats and sheep. It's varied, hilly, rewarding trekking with little flat but plenty to fascinate and motivate us on the way. We stay in traditional Berber villages each night, allowing us to discover the charming culture and friendly hospitality of the Berbers, and finish in colourful Marrakech for wonderful cultural contrast!

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly London to Marrakech – Ikhf N'Ighir

On arrival we transfer out of Marrakech, headed for the mountains, to our base in the village of Ikhf N'Ighir, lying at 1850m at the entrance of the Aït Hkim valley. Here we will have a detailed trip briefing before a good night's rest. Night village house.

Drive approx. 4 hours

Day 2: Ikhf N'Ighir – Rbat – Aït Imi – Ikhf N'Ighir

After breakfast, we begin our trek following a path to Aït Oingdal, headed uphill, where a fantastic view of the lush, green valleys and surrounding mountain chains await us. From here, we descend further into the valley via a

different trail to the scenic village of Rbat. After a picnic lunch stop near a small village, we head uphill once again to the larger village of Aït Imi, where we are usually welcomed into a local home for a thirst-quenching cup of tea! A short walk takes us into Tabant, the main village within the valley. Berbers of the region come to the weekly souk held here on Sundays, to buy and sell a variety of their wares, from food to livestock. Even on other days of the week, it's a busy place and a good hub for exchanging the latest local news. From Tabant we return to Ikhf N'Ighir for the night. Night village house.

Trek approx. 6-7 hours

Day 3: Ikhf N'Ighir – Ahbak – Ikhf N'Ighir

We begin the day by heading up the narrow valley of Anssous, where we're rewarded for our efforts with yet another panoramic view. From here we join part of an old mule path connecting the Bougmez and Abbas valleys, passing through picturesque mud-brick villages shadowed by large walnut trees. Green cultivated fields contrast with the browns and reds of the rocky mountain slopes around us, and every rise brings new views. It's a real privilege to see the local way of life along the way, and one of the highlights of our trek. After ascending to the highest point of our trek (2200m), we enjoy fabulous views into the Ahbak valley before walking back downhill for our last night in Ikhf N'Ighir. Night village house.

Trek approx. 4-5 hours

Day 4: Ikhf N'Ighir – Sidi Moussa – Agouti – Marrakech

After a good breakfast, we wave goodbye to our hospitable hosts. Our route this morning follows trails through lush, fertile fields of alfalfa and apple trees. We soon reach the village of Aguerd n'Ouzrou, where the faint footprints of an Atlasaurus can be seen in the rocks behind La Kasbah du M'Goun, reminding us that dinosaurs roamed this region millions of years ago! From here, we follow a track up to the fortified hilltop granary and shrine of Sidi Moussa (2000m), where local villagers come to pay their respects. The panoramic views across the entire valley from here are spectacular! Heading down into the village of Agouti, the westernmost settlement in the valley, we stop for a picnic lunch and meet our vehicles. Leaving the Happy Valley satisfied with our achievements, we drive back to Marrakech. Here, we can enjoy an evening walk through Jma El Fnaa, the main square – one of the best times to experience the atmosphere. We celebrate our achievements with a great Moroccan feast in a nearby restaurant. Night hotel.

Trek approx. 4-5 hours; drive approx. 4 hours

Day 5: 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 accommodation, and meals except where specified
- Discover Adventure leaders; doctor with group of 15 or more participants; local guides and support team
- 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
- 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

GRADE | YELLOW

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **YELLOW** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)

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.

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.

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

While trekking we stay in a traditional-style village homestay which allows a wonderful insight to local culture. It is relatively rustic, though adapted for tourists. Expect dorm-style rooms, usually sharing with 4-6 others. We stay in hotels (of a 2-3* standard or equivalent) at the start and end of the trip; standards may vary between different hotels, but they are generally clean and comfortable with good facilities.

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.

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.

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.

BUY YOUR KITBAG

Only £45 (inc p&p) - designed to deal with the rigours of your challenge.

Easier for accessing gear than a rucksack (especially when camping) this is probably the most cost-effective way to take your luggage on a Discover Adventure challenge!



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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 26 Apr 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.