

## Sahara Desert Trek – NEW For 2024



Duration: 7 days

A challenging trek against the backdrop of the awe-inspiring Sahara Desert, this adventurous trip offers a unique desert experience.

From flat desert floor scattered with ancient fossils, to perfect wind-blown sand-dunes, this trek is diverse and demanding. The vast, unforgiving desert is a truly beautiful place to discover, while the incredible star-strewn night skies are unforgettable, especially with a new moon.

Accompanied by Berber guides and a small caravan of camels, our remote night-camps with camp-fires and Berber singing are often a real highlight of this Sahara trekking adventure!

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1: Fly London to Marrakech; transfer to Ouarzazate

On arrival in Marrakech, we meet our transport and drive (approx. 4 hours) over the spectacular High Atlas Mountains to Ouarzazate. Pronounced 'Wazzazat', this busy town, famous for its film studios, lies on the edge of the desert. Night hotel.

### Day 2: Ouarzazate – Zagora – Erg Lihoudi

After an early breakfast, we have a detailed briefing and then leave for the five-hour drive to M'Hamid, our starting point. Our drive takes us over the low mountains of the Jebel Sarhro and down the 'Valley of a Thousand Kasbahs' into the desert. We have a brief stop in Zagora to buy a shamlâ (native headscarf); you might also want to enjoy a

last cold drink before the heat of the desert! On arrival at our start point, we have lunch while the cameleers load up the camels. Our late afternoon trek takes us firstly across flat open plain and then into Erg Lihoudi, our first taste of small dunes. We make camp at the edge of the dunes for the night. Night camp.

**Drive approx. 5 hours; trek approx. 3 hours**

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### Day 3: Erg Lihoudi - Oued Naam

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, load the camels and head off across Erg Lihoudi, walking across the small dunes and around the larger ones. Amongst the dunes are small tamarisk trees that manage to flourish in this harsh environment. Continuing through the small dunes, we can see the Jebel Bani Mountains to the north and dunes to the south. After around four hours, we stop for lunch in the shade of a large tree. During the afternoon we walk out of the dunes and onto a flat rocky plateau where we make camp near Oued Naam close to a well. Night camp.

**Trek approx. 6 hours**

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### Day 4: Oued Naam – Bouguern

Leaving camp behind us, we walk across flat, open country with the camels not far behind. The surface is firm and stony; tough grass pokes through in places. We skirt to the north of some low dunes, walking on both soft sand and stony plateau, where fossilised sea creatures can be found. The hottest part of the day sees us in the shade having lunch, with time to relax and refill water bottles. In the afternoon we head across beautifully-formed low dunes to an area called Bouguern, where there are several large dunes and clumps of palm trees. The walking is tough and tiring; sand fills our boots, and our feet sink into the small dunes. After an hour we see the large dunes in the distance and head for them. Distance is hard to gauge in the desert and it takes a further two hours to reach the dunes and our campsite perched on a bluff overlooking the dunes. Night camp.

**Trek approx. 7 hours**

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### Day 5: Bouguern – Erg Chegaga

After a good breakfast we head off down a gully onto the desert floor. We spend the morning crossing hamada, or stony flat desert. We have several short climbs and cross dry and dusty plains. There is very little vegetation around but we manage to find the only tree for miles to have lunch under. When the hottest part of the day has passed, we set off across more hamada until we cross a ridge and have a spectacular view of Chegaga, the largest sand dune of the region. We camp below the dunes for the night. Night camp.

**Trek approx. 7 hours**

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### Day 6: Erg Chegaga – Marrakech

Our last big challenge on this trek, reaching the top of Chegaga is worth it for the incredible views, and the sense of achievement! The day starts with a spectacular dawn raid climb – a 100m height gain for sunrise. To the south are rolling dunes as far as you can see; to the north, hamada and the Jebel Bani. After taking in the view, we have

fun descending the dune along one of the narrow ridges. Regrouping at the bottom, we load into landrovers and drive the last bumpy section across the desert piste to the tarmac road. The exciting journey is great fun if a little bouncy! We then transfer to our bus, and cross the stunning High Atlas Mountains to Marrakech, where we check into our hotel. Later that evening, we'll head out to a restaurant in the heart of the souk, where we celebrate in style! Night hotel.

**Trek approx. 2 hours; drive approx. 8 hours**

## Day 7: Fly Marrakech to London

An early transfer takes us to the airport, and we fly home.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flight from London to Morocco
- All meals except where specified, accommodation and camping equipment
- Discover Adventure leaders; doctor with group of 20 or more participants; local guides & cooks, camels, cameleers and drivers
- 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'
- 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

## 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.

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#### 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.

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#### 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.

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#### 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.

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## 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](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice).

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## 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.

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## Accommodation

Whilst on the trek you will be **camping in tents with room for 2 people plus your luggage**, though sleeping out under the stars for at least one night is highly recommended! On this challenge, it's expected that everyone will share tasks together, like putting up tents each evening in camp. We use good hotels at the start and end of the trip.

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## Roomshare Arrangements

Accommodation is usually on a twin-share basis. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation. 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.

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## 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.**

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## Travel Insurance

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.

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## 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!

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## 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.

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## 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](#).

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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 14 May 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.