

## 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.

## 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**

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**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**

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### 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**

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### 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**

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## 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



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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 2 Mar 2021, and the challenge is subject to change.