

Further Information

This document has been compiled by our local Ground Handlers and is based on recommendations from previous expeditions.

Please do take into account your own personal preferences and common sense!

We welcome feedback on how this document can be improved upon your return from your Challenge.



A few notes.....

Morocco is about 3 hours in flight time from London on the North Coast of Africa. The time difference in the summer is 1 hour later than GMT. Morocco includes an Atlantic coastline, a flat arid interior rising up to the massive mountain range of the High Atlas (of which Toubkal is the highest peak), and another smaller mountain range before the countries southern borders in the Sahara desert.

The people of Morocco are of Berber and Arabic origin, speaking different languages. The official language is the Moroccan dialect of Arabic, and Arabic itself. The Berbers speak Tachelhit. The country is Islamic and is reined by Mohamed VI.

Marrakech was originally a Berber city and first time visitors are struck by the rose colour of all the buildings down to even the taxis. One reason for this is that it can get so hot in summer that white buildings would be uncomfortable to be near with reflected heat. The colour also fits in well with the surrounding ochre of the countryside.

The old city or medina is a fascinating place to explore. The souks which form most of the medieval warren of streets and houses can sell just about anything, and give a perfect chance to try out your haggling techniques! Outside the medina is the newer part of the city called Gueliz and the Hivernage. There are gardens to explore here, (Menara and Majorelle) camel rides to be taken, or serious shopping on the boulevards. Street cafes abound to suit all pockets.

Morocco is very welcoming and the people are friendly, enjoy your experience!

Climate & Temperatures

June and September - Marrakech, average day time- 30-35 °C, night time – 15-25 °C

Mountains, average day time - 15-30 °C, night time- 0-10 °C

The summit could feel much colder in the wind, and there is always a possibility of rain.

Time

Morocco is in the same time zone as the UK, except in the summer when it is +1 GMT.

Food

The hotel in Marrakech is on a bed and breakfast basis, apart from the last night where there will be a celebratory dinner! All meals are supplied on the trek, including fully cooked dinners. You will have a chance to try the local Moroccan specialities including tagines and couscous.

Difficulty

The trek, while not too technical in the walking/climbing sense, is quite tough unless you are used to high altitude. The first day ascends to over 3,000m and at this level breathlessness on physical activity is common. The mountain has a rocky path that ascends to the summit and care is needed on descent with the loose stones on the path. On the way will be terrific views of mountain scenery ascending through the fields and orchards to the high jagged rocks typical of the Atlas range.

The distance trekked on Day 2 is approx. 6 miles, Day 3 is approx. 5 miles, Day 4 is approx. 5 miles. Even though these distances don't seem far, remember, **this is a Challenge and you will be walking at altitude.** We recommend that you train for a few months before the trek. This could include a hill walk at weekends, stair climbing, anything that would get the muscles used to steep ascents and descents. This would be a good opportunity to try out your kit and wear in boots. Any form of endurance exercise would be good training. Bear in mind that altitude sickness can hit anyone, whether you are fit or not fit, old or young. High altitude and heat will mean you have to drink much more than you think. Please see High Altitude Notes.

Further Information cont.



Equipment

All equipment that you should bring is shown on the Kit List. If we are camping at Nelter Hut, then tents and other equipment will be provided, but participants do still need to bring their own sleeping bag.

Luggage

Luggage will be transferred with you to the hotel and the base camp at Nelter Hut. Any luggage that you don't need for the climb please leave in the hotel where it will be held in a safe place. Please try to keep the amount taken on a trek to the minimum for the mules' sake!

The overnight soft bag will be carried by mule to the base camp where it will be available in the evenings after the days walk is over.

Health/Vaccinations

It is highly recommended you consult your Doctor about what immunisations are required for Morocco.

The vaccinations below are given as a guideline only – always consult your own Doctor:-

Hepatitis A, Typhoid and Diphtheria
Tetanus and polio boosters should be up to date

Accommodation and Sleeping arrangements

Whilst on trek we will stay at Nelter Hut – the base camp for the Summit attempt. If we have a very large group, we will camp at the Hut – 2 people to a tent with mattresses being supplied. If we have a smaller group, we may stay inside the Hut – either way, sleeping bags will still be needed.

Toilets and washing facilities

Whilst in Marrakech, we will stay in a Hotel using twin rooms with en-suite washing facilities. There are very basic washing facilities at Nelter Hut and there are also toilets – but these are BASIC!

Security and Safety

Our group will be accompanied by experienced local Berber guides, in addition to a Global Adventure Challenge Expedition Leader from the UK. Full comprehensive medical kits will be taken and Satellite Telephones will also accompany the group ensuring safety.

Passport/Visa

There are no visas needed to enter Morocco on a free 3 month tourist visa if you are a UK, European or American citizen. However, a customs/police form will be given to you on the flight to Morocco which needs to be completed and handed to the immigration police on arrival. A departure form needs to be completed before leaving the country at the airport. Please contact the Embassy if you are not sure.

Water

Mineral water is carried by the mules and can be bought per bottle (1.5 Lt.) for 10 DH. Otherwise you may wish to carry water purification tablets, although there will be no running water available on the ascent day.

Valuables

You can leave passports and tickets in the hotel safe, or take it with you if you prefer.

Currency & Spending Money

The currency is the Dirham, which is roughly 15 to the pound. Dirhams can be found at the departure airports (London) or at cash machines in the city. Cash can also be exchanged in banks or associated currency exchangers (English notes only). Credit cards can be used in the large shops or supermarkets, but not in the souks or small shops - cash is needed here. As a guide, a cup of coffee is 6-15 DH, a glass of orange juice in the Place Jamna el Fnaa- 3DH, a dinner of two courses 25- 200 DH (of course there are also expensive places). A light weight women's top - about 100DH in the souk.

Further Information cont.



Tipping

Tipping your guide(s) is appropriate, customary and always appreciated. Your guides work in teams and evenly split all gratuities they receive. Your gratuity should reflect the quality of service you received and anything special your guide(s) did to enhance your trip.

Local Life

You will see all types of people in Marrakech, it is quite cosmopolitan. However if exploring a little further you will find souks that only locals go to, such as the fruit vegetable markets, the carpet markets and the furniture shops near the olive oil factory. Here you will see nearly all the women wearing Djellaba's (long robes with long sleeves and hood) and the foulard or head scarf. The mosque calls out 5 times a day for prayer, and you will probably be woken by the call from the muezzin at the early morning call before you get used to it.

In the mountains the villagers are much more traditional than in the town and the women wear brightly covered dresses and headscarves. There the main transport is the mule or donkey and people work in the fields or in the orchards. We recommend that people cover their arms and legs when walking through the village in respect for the culture (especially women). The children may come up to you and ask for sweets or pens, but please don't give to them, it encourages them to stay out of school. (Your guide will let you know what the dos and don'ts are.)

Snakes and Bugs

The occasional adder may be seen at a distance; however, you would be lucky to see one. Otherwise, the only insects to be wary about are bees and wasps near the orchards and mosquitoes lower down (not many). The noise, like a motorcycle in bushes, around the trek belongs to crickets. Look out for fireflies at night, usually sitting in the vegetation.

Telephone Signals

Mobile signals can be found all over Morocco, (roam for IAM and Maroc Telecom). There will be occasional patches of no signal on the ascent, but mobiles should work at the base camp, the foot of the ascent, and the summit itself.

Please note that the information above is correct at the time of going to publication