

## MOROCCO

### Moroccan Three Summits Trek

*This is an Open Challenge itinerary; you can take part on the dates shown and raise money for a charity of your choice.*

**Duration:** 10 days / 9 nights

**Trip Grade:** Tough

**Dates:**

20 Jun – 29 Jun 2014    19 Jun – 28 Jun 2015  
 19 Sep – 28 Sep 2014    18 Sep – 27 Sep 2015

| Payment Options:     | 2014  | 2015  |
|----------------------|-------|-------|
| <b>Fundraising:</b>  |       |       |
| Registration Fee     | £199  | £199  |
|                      | +     | +     |
| Fundraising Target   | £2300 | £2400 |
| <b>Self Payment:</b> |       |       |
| Registration Fee     | £199  | £199  |
|                      | +     | +     |
| Trip Cost            | £1150 | £1200 |

*Please note Registration Fee is in addition to Trip Cost / Fundraising Target. For further detail on payment options see our website or contact us*



**We trek through diverse scenery, from beautiful cultivated valleys with mud-brick houses perched on the slopes, rock formations and gorges, scree slopes and barren peaks, with endless panoramas over this spectacular mountain scenery and the vast desert beyond. We have time at the end to explore Marrakech, a vibrant, bustling city which provides the perfect contrast to our week in the mountains.**



**The three highest mountains in North Africa are all located in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, a vast massif stretching some 450 miles from the Algerian border to the Atlantic Ocean. We summit all three during this tough challenge: Toubkal (the highest), Ouanoukrim and M'Goun. Despite time built in to acclimatise, with all three summits above 4000m this is a demanding altitude trek.**

#### ITINERARY

##### Day 1: Fly London to Marrakech

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

##### Day 2: Marrakech – Ait Bougmez – Azib Ikiss

After breakfast we drive out of the city and head into the mountains. The Central High Atlas is the wildest part of the High Atlas range, renowned for its beautiful traditional villages and isolated valleys. After a scenic drive which only whets our appetite for the days ahead, we reach the Ait Bougmez valley. Nicknamed 'happy valley', its reputation for being one of the most beautiful valleys in the High Atlas is well-founded. Fertile green pastures contrast with the reddish rocky peaks around, and streams tumble down from the M'Goun massif allowing fruit trees and crops to grow – a rare sight in these barren mountain landscapes. We drive via the small picturesque town of Azilal (1351m), and meet up with our team of

muleteers at a nearby village. After a scenic lunch we set off! We follow a clear path through the main valley, which takes us upwards gradually. We're likely to see villagers tending their fields; it's a wonderful glimpse into this remote mountain way of life. We come to the Arous gorge – a small valley eroded by water to form a smooth rocky gorge – and hike up through it. Climbing more steadily now, we come to Azib Ikiss, where we camp on a plateau (2300m). Look out for eagles and vultures wheeling in the skies above. Night camp.

**Drive approx 3.5 hours; trek approx 5 hours**

### Day 3: Azib Ikiss – Tarkeddid Plateau

We wake early and, after a good breakfast, load the mules and begin our first full day's trek – climbing up through the valley towards the lovely Tarkeddid Plateau. The scenery around us is spectacular, with the smooth curves of the mountain peaks on the horizon and immense valleys stretching around us. This is a very remote area and we are unlikely to see many other trekkers. Although the vegetation is sparser now we are higher, there are some poplars, junipers and shrubs such as broom. We pass huge chunks of rock that have tumbled down the slopes long ago, and fabulous wind-eroded turrets of rock and mud. Our path takes us steeply up to the mountain pass of Tizi-n-Tazite (2909m), and then continues even more steeply to our second pass of Tizi-n-Targadit (3400m) – we are likely to feel the effects of being at altitude as we climb this pass. The views from here are breathtaking, as we look back over the Ait Bougmez valley below us. From here we can also view tomorrow's great challenge – the peak of M'Goun. Dropping down from the pass, another couple of hours' walk brings us to our scenic camp on the plateau (3000m). Night camp.

**Trek approx 7 hours**



### Day 4: M'Goun Summit

This is a big day: our first summit, and arguably the hardest ascent of our three peaks. We start early and adopt a gentle pace as we climb. Our day's walk starts in open mountain country, with wonderful views as we ascend up through the valley. Becoming steeper and rockier, our route then takes us up onto an exposed ridge – the hardest part of the ascent. We follow the ridge for a couple of hours to the summit of M'Goun (4068m). From here we have wonderful views over the mountains and valleys of the High Atlas, and can see the vast Sahara Desert in the distance. After soaking up the views and taking the obligatory

group photo, we start our descent. Coming down can be nearly as challenging as going up, but there are wonderful panoramic views of the valleys, dotted with small Berber villages clinging to the rocky ledges. We also pass remnants of old shepherd's huts and may see the temporary settlements of local semi-nomadic farmers as we drop down to our valley camp (2600m). Night camp.



**Trek approx 9-11 hours**

### Day 5: Azib Imin Oulaoune – Amsouzart

An early start sees us trekking predominantly downhill as we follow good tracks through picturesque valley



landscapes. Looking back up at the mountains towering above us, it's hard to believe we were up there only yesterday! We walk out along a river-bed, and come to the small village of Imin Oulaoune; after walking through the village, which provides a wonderful insight into traditional Berber life here in the mountains, we follow the rough village road to the river, where we have lunch. Then we load up into the waiting vehicles and drive south through the mountains to the village of Amsouart (1600m) – the last section of this drive is on dirt road. This lovely village is the quiet southern gateway to Mt Toubkal; we spend the night here. Night guesthouse.

### **Trek approx 5 hours; drive approx 4 hours**

#### **Day 6: Amsouart – Mouflon Hut / Camp**

An early start sees us enjoying a hearty breakfast and loading up the luggage onto our new team of mules. We then begin our trek. This area is more rugged and rocky than the M'Goun region we have seen, with steep-sided valleys eroded by the wind; many of them are cultivated. Our route ascends towards Lac Ifni, passing many small mud-brick villages as we go; we then drop down to the lake itself. Lac Ifni (2200m) is the only lake in this area of the mountains, and its dark blue waters provide a real contrast to the colours of the mountains that tower loftily around us. It's a beautiful place to stop and soak up the



atmosphere. We follow the edge of the lake – our only real flat section! – and then our path starts to climb on a well-defined, narrow path through the rocks. We climb more steeply, zig-zagging before we eventually crest the pass of Tizi Ouanoums (3664m). We take a break to enjoy the lovely views of the Toubkal valley and the red mountain ridges before us, and the lake below. We then drop down to our accommodation for the night: a scenic camp which involves less back-tracking tomorrow, or further down to Mouflon Hut (3200m); this is dependent on general group pace. Night mountain hut / camp.

### **Trek approx 7-9 hours**

#### **Day 7: Ouanoukrim Summit**

Our second summit beckons today! We rise early and retrace our steps, ascending some of yesterday's descent. Our route is steep in places but overall is not as tough as the M'Goun ascent day. We trek up to the high pass of Tizi n'Ougan (3750m) and then continue on to Ouanoukrim (4089m). There is some scrambling over rocks in places and there may be a few patches of leftover snow to cross, but we don't need any technical



knowledge or experience. The second-highest mountain in North Africa, Ouanoukrim actually has two summits; we trek to Timzguida, a few metres higher than its twin. After a while to enjoy the views of the surrounding peaks, including neighbouring Toubkal, we start our descent to Mouflon Hut (3200m). Night mountain hut.

### **Trek approx 8-10 hours**

#### **Day 8: Toubkal Summit – Imlil**

Our last and highest summit beckons: Mount Toubkal, the highest peak in North Africa at 4167m. We rise before dawn, as we have a lot to achieve today. We'll probably be tired from yesterday's efforts, but we'll also be well-acclimatised to the altitude and feeling very motivated!



Armed with head-torches, we start in the dark and trek along well-trodden rocky tracks that twist their way up the mountain. We stop to admire the sunrise illuminating the spectacular landscapes around us as we ascend. Higher up, there are some loose shale sections and may be snow underfoot in places. There is some scree as we near the top, but then we are standing at the summit – our final one! It's a real achievement and we have enough time to savour the feeling as we enjoy the dramatic views. We then descend to the north, fairly gently at first, then zig-zagging quite steeply. Our path is at times narrow as we descend through the wonderful landscapes of a hanging valley, then pass through the tiny hamlet of Sidi Chamharouch (2200m), which has grown up around a Muslim shrine. We continue downhill, passing small villages and walnut groves as we come to the low flood plain at the foot of the mountain. We finally come to the busy Berber village of Imlil (1740m), a lovely spot to finish our trek. Night hotel.

## Trek approx 10-12 hours

### Day 9: Marrakech

A more leisurely start today! After breakfast our vehicles are waiting to whisk us off to the exciting city of Marrakech – no better place to celebrate our huge achievements of this week. After checking into our hotel, we are free to enjoy the buzz of Marrakech, including the fascinating Jma el Fnaa – the main square – with its food-stalls, musicians, story-tellers, street-performers and snake-charmers. Wander the city's famous bustling souks,



haggling for souvenirs or just enjoying the cultural flavour! It's a real contrast to our remote mountains 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.

*(Lunch and Dinner not included)*



### Day 10: Fly Marrakech to London

After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our flight back to London.

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

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### TOUR COST

All accommodation is included, as well as all flights and transfers, camping equipment (except sleeping bag and sleeping mat), all meals except two (as specified in itinerary), entrance to any sites visited as part of the itinerary. Any airline fuel supplement is also included in the tour cost.

Experienced Discover Adventure leaders and doctor (depending on final group size) are also included, along with a local support crew of guides, cooks, muleteers and drivers.

It does not include personal travel insurance, two meals as specified, tip for local crew, or international departure tax. It also does not



include any entrance fees for any optional sites you may wish to visit.

## Costs in Morocco

We recommend you budget for the following costs in-country:

- Tips for Local Crew (see below): £25
- Meals not included: £35-45

Remember to allow extra for drinks, souvenirs & other personal expenses. This recommendation is a guideline only. Please note that costs may fluctuate and we have no control over any changes.

**We strongly recommend you carry a credit card in case of personal emergency.**

## FLIGHT INFORMATION

Group flights leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick 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).

We are most likely to fly with Royal Air Maroc. However, we don't always fly with the same airline so this is a guideline only. 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.**

## Connecting Flights

If you book flights to Heathrow or Gatwick, it is your responsibility to allow plenty of time to connect to the group flight and to cope with any flight schedule changes. Please be aware that the best deals allow little flexibility if

## 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 trekkers 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!

Our experienced tour leaders and local crew will help bridge the cultural gap; take advantage of their knowledge so you can come away with an understanding of a new culture as well as the achievement of completing a challenging trek.

you need to change them. We regret that we are unable to book connecting flights for you.

## Transit Stops

When booking group flights we endeavour to find the best flights that match our itinerary. There are often no direct flights to our destination, so do be prepared for transit stops: bring a good book or chat to your fellow trekkers! Airlines that do offer direct flights rarely offer competitive rates for groups. Please remember that the main purpose of our trips is to raise money for charity!





## Flying Separately

If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost. You will be responsible for making your own arrangements for meeting the rest of the group, though we can advise you. We need to know if you do not require our group flight as early as possible - please complete the form in the information pack you'll be sent with your booking confirmation.

## ACCOMMODATION

When camping, we usually use large tents which sleep 6-8 people. Water may be scarce though there should be some opportunities to wash; wet-wipes are recommended! We spend one night in a village guesthouse and two nights in a mountain hut; this is fairly basic but does have toilets and showers. We use good hotels on a twin-share basis with en-suite facilities when in Marrakech. Please do not expect the same standards as a tourist hotel in the UK - they may be better in some ways and more basic in others!

## FOOD

All food is included when trekking. The food is great, very varied and there is plenty of it! Two meals as specified in the itinerary are not included.

## Dietary Requirements

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 will be in rural areas and 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 you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

## Other Meals

Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally when we are in towns or cities and you are free to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit every budget.

## PASSPORT, VISA & VACCINATIONS

A valid ten-year passport is essential; it should be valid for at least 6 months after arrival in Morocco. There is currently no visa requirement for UK citizens. Other nationalities should check entry requirements.

We insist that you have had a Tetanus injection in the last ten years, and highly recommend protection against Polio, Hepatitis A and Typhoid.

**You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.**



## TREKKING INFORMATION

### Terrain

Terrain is mainly uphill or downhill on dry, rocky tracks. There are some gravel and shale sections which can be loose underfoot, and there may be some snow as we reach high elevations. Some sections of our route are very steep. There are a few stream crossings. This trek requires a good level of fitness; the altitude adds to the challenge. The itinerary is designed to allow for good

acclimatisation to the altitude, and we ascend slowly on summit days, but you may still feel the effects of being at altitude such as headaches and shortness of breath when trekking.



## Trekking Distances

Because of the varied terrain and lack of accurate maps, it's not possible to give accurate daily distances. It's also much more useful when training to think about the hours you need to walk for!

### **FITNESS WARNING: DESIGNED TO BE CHALLENGING!**

This trek is designed to be challenging for those of good health and fitness, and is achievable for most people provided they train well in advance. We will supply you with a thorough training guide when you have registered. Training for the challenge is all part of the preparation and requires commitment! Without it, you will find the trek less enjoyable – and we want you to have the time of your life!

**We are always happy to talk through the trip in more detail with you if you are worried about your fitness at any stage.**

## Clothing & Equipment

The information below gives you an idea of the climate, but be prepared for all weathers and temperatures. Weather conditions can change quickly. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, as well as details on useful discounts you are entitled to as a Discover Adventure customer. We are always available if you need advice.

## Weather

It's usually clear, pleasantly warm and sunny during the trek until nearer the summit where the elevation has an impact on temperature. Mornings and evenings can be very cold – there may even be frost on the tents in the morning. Though rain is unlikely, there is always a possibility we'll get a wet or stormy day, and it may be windy.



## Fitness Levels

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience and fitness, all ages and backgrounds. We expect all participants to train hard in advance to achieve this challenge, but we respect everyone's limits. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners will 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.

### **TRAINING WEEKENDS: £140 SPECIAL OFFER!**

**Only when you book at the same time as registering for your main challenge**

Discover Adventure Training Weekends in Snowdonia National Park are designed help you prepare for your challenge. Whether you use the weekend to gauge your fitness, get your training back on track, boost your confidence, get advice or meet other trekkers, you're bound to find it incredibly useful!

*For dates and further information see our brochure or website.*

## TRIP SUPPORT

### Discover Adventure Crew

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. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.



All our leaders are from the UK or other English-speaking countries. Most work for us on an ad-hoc basis and have 'real' jobs in-between trips! We never send our leaders to the same destination for months on end – we want them to be as enthusiastic about your trip as you are.

Although our leaders are trained in expedition first-aid, they are accompanied by an expedition doctor or medic, who is there to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any incidents. They help the leaders to ensure the trip runs smoothly and encourage you when things get tough.

The number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but an average-sized group in the High Atlas would be led by two leaders and a doctor. At Discover Adventure we pride ourselves on our high leader: trekker ratio and believe it leads to greater trip enjoyment as well as excellent trip safety.

### Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, drivers, mulemen and cooks. Your local guide knows the local area well, and is a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Drivers and cooks do not always speak English but are very friendly and

approachable. The Discover Adventure crew works closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

### Tips for Local Crew

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek.

Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf

you will be happy to donate something! See 'Costs in Morocco' above for a guideline amount; your leader will let you know if there is any change to this guideline. All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in this country is far below what you would spend on a normal night out.

### Luggage

Vehicles take the group to the start of the trek and pick us up at the end; in addition we have a short transfer on Day 5. All luggage, food, water and camping equipment is carried by mules when trekking.

It is essential that your luggage is carried in either a soft expedition kitbag or soft rucksack. These are easily loaded onto the mules. Hard-sided luggage is completely unsuitable. 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.







## 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 radios and emergency satellite phones, extensive medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. They always have access to our 24-hour emergency back-up in the UK. Our leaders 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 compulsory medical questionnaires and travel insurance – is all done with your safety in mind.

## WORLDWIDE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Long before 'Responsible Tourism' became a recognised phrase, we designed and ran our trips to ensure they made minimum impact on the environment and a positive impact on the local communities we pass through. AITO, our Trade Association, has recognised the work we do in this area and has awarded us 5 stars as a Responsible Tour Operator.

### Discover Adventure Projects

We are supporting a tree-planting project in Peru and a children's home in Tanzania on a



long-term basis. If you would like to 'give something back' please consider donating £5 to our projects when you sign up. Please see our website for more details.

### Carbon Offsetting

We encourage all our customers to offset emissions connected with their trip. You can offset at any time in the lead-up to departure by visiting Climate Care via our website and making a donation to a worthwhile project supported by them. Alternatively, if you wish to take more practical action in the UK you can volunteer for a day with TCV and work on an environmental project local to you. Work may include construction footpaths, dry stone walling, creating wildlife habitats or planting trees in your community. Volunteer today at [www.tcv.org.uk](http://www.tcv.org.uk) or call 01302 388883.



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