

# EXPLORE!

## Toubkal Long Weekend

5 days

Morocco - Trip code ATA



## Toubkal Long Weekend

This short trip focuses on climbing to the summit of North Africa's highest peak, Jebel Toubkal (4,167m). Travel from the ancient walled city of Marrakech to the High Atlas Mountains, enjoying traditional Berber hospitality as we make our ascent to the campsite at Naltner. From the summit enjoy panoramic views across the entire Atlas chain and towards the Sahara Desert.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Jebel Toubkal** - Ascend to the summit of the highest peak in North Africa
- ★ **The Atlas Mountains** - Hiking among the stunning landscapes of the High Atlas
- ★ **Berber Villages** - Discover remote villages and learn about the tradition and culture of the friendly local people
- ★ **Marrakech** - A chance to explore Morocco's captivating 'Red City'

### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

#### Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, sometimes with en suite facilities.

**WALKING GRADE:****Challenging**

You need to have a good level of fitness and previous trekking experience is recommended. Trekking days are generally longer, challenging and at higher altitudes. Terrain may be difficult and ascents and descents are often demanding.

**GROUP SIZE:****10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

# Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

## DAY 1 - Join tour Marrakech

Marrakech is the spiritual heart of Morocco, the cultural melting pot of the mountain Berbers and the desert peoples of the south, whose eclectic mix of ideals and traditions has resulted in a fascinating clash of colour, noise and visual delights that is straight out of the 'Arabian Nights'. If you have time on arrival you could take a look around the Old Town. The group introductory meeting will take place this evening.



**Accommodation: Le Grand Imilchil** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 2 - Drive to Imlil; trek to Toubkal camp via Aremd

Leaving the city behind we drive south today, towards the craggy peaks and plunging valleys of the Toubkal Massif. Crossing the Haouz Plain we pass through the tiny town of Asni, from where our road begins to climb towards the foothills of the Massif. Below us the valley of the Oued Rhirhaia stretches out into the distance and small villages cling to the sides of the steep hills as we meander our way towards the village of Imlil (1740m). Here we leave our vehicle and, in the company of our mountain guide, begin our trek, heading along the Mizane Valley, first towards the village of Aremd (1900m) and then onto the shrine of Sidi Chamarouch. Built on a moraine spur overlooking the valley floor, Aremd is the largest village in the valley and provides an interesting mix of traditional terraced farming, gites and streets that seem to be permanently gridlocked by goats and cattle. For generations the local Berber villagers have worked these lands, producing corn, potatoes and walnuts from the harsh landscape. Continuing across the flood plain our route takes us along mule tracks and up into the high rocky cliffs above the valley. Crossing the river we eventually come to the pastoral shrine of Sidi Chamarouch, which attracts tourists and pilgrims alike (although only Muslims are allowed to cross the stone bridge to visit the marabout shrine itself). The village sits beside a small waterfall, a jumbled cluster of houses that seem to melt together into an anarchic mass. From here the trail continues to climb steadily, snaking and zigzagging its way up to the snowline and our camp (3206m). Our first walk covers 11 kilometres and takes about five hours. There is a total ascent of approximately +1460m.



## Accommodation: Neltner Mountain Camp (or similar)



Simple Camping



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 3 - Trek to summit of Jebel Toubkal (4165m)

Early this morning we make our attempt on the summit of Jebel Toubkal, the highest peak in Northern Africa. Our route takes us up the south cirque, crossing the stream above the refuge and then heading across one of the mountains numerous scree fields, where we will have to negotiate a seemingly endless carpet of boulders and rocks. The walking is relatively straightforward, but the scree and the altitude will make the going quite difficult in parts, however, the views along the way make the journey more than worthwhile. Cresting the ridgeline we find ourselves on the plateau, from where it is a short walk to the summit and the vistas out across the surrounding landscape are quite breathtaking. From here there are unrestricted views in every direction, from the Marrakech Plain to the High Atlas in the north and as far south as the Anti-Atlas and the Sahara. Pliny, the great Roman scholar, once described the High Atlas Mountains as 'the most fabulous mountains in all of Africa' and from our vantage point high above the valley it is easy to understand why. Retracing our steps we then return down the mountain and head back towards Aremd (1900m), where we will spend the night in a village house. Our trek today covers 13.5 kilometres and takes 10 to 11 hours. The approximate total ascent and descent is + 967m and -2217m.



## Accommodation: Aremd Village House (or similar)



Simple Village House



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 4 - Trek to Imlil; drive to Marrakech for a free afternoon

Returning on foot to Imlil (1740m) this morning, we then drive back to Marrakech where, on arrival, you will have some free time to explore the city's colourful souks and its celebrated Djemma El Fna Square. A feast for the senses, the area is a chaotic confusion of noise and colour, where you will find the streets alive with storytellers and letter-writers, musicians, jugglers and watersellers. There is the option to take an afternoon walking tour around the souks with a local guide, also visiting the museum and the elegant Koutoubia mosque and tower, reputed to be the most perfect Islamic monument in North Africa. Marrakech is divided into two distinct parts, the Gueliz (or modern French-built city) and the Medina (the Old City) and you may prefer to spend your final afternoon independently exploring its maze of narrow streets, filled with the sounds, colours and smells of the exotic, perhaps haggling for some last minute presents, or just sitting in a café and watching the street tableaux unfold before you. The walk back to Imlil is one and a half kilometres and takes around 45 minutes. The total descent is -210m.



## Accommodation: Le Grand Imilchil (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Tour ends Marrakech

Your tour ends today in Marrakech after breakfast. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may be able to spend some

additional time wandering in the souks of the 'Red City' or buying the last souvenirs.

**IOY** Meals Provided: Breakfast

# Walking and Trekking information

## DAILY DISTANCES

Day 2	11km
Day 3	13.5km
Day 4	1.5km

### Walking grade

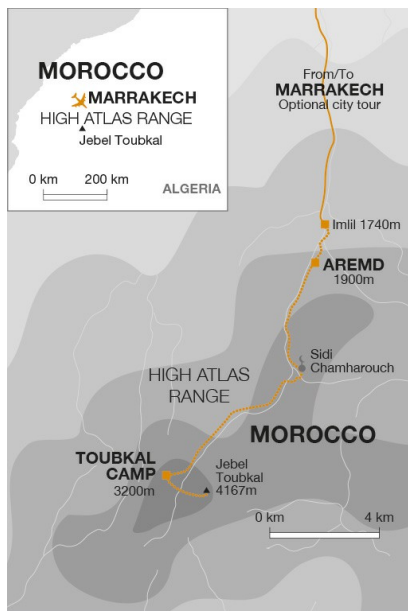
Challenging

### Trek details

Trek for 2 days for 5 hours on the first day and 10 to 11 hours on the second day, plus a short walk on the return. Maximum altitude 4167m. Paths generally well defined but rocky mule tracks. The ascent and descent from Toubkal is on uneven paths with rocks and scree in places. Trekking poles are recommended particularly for the descent. Please be aware that there may be snow on the summit particularly at the beginning of the season. We have graded this trek as challenging. Mules carry the luggage.

### Max walking altitude (m)

4167



# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 4  
Lunch: 2  
Dinner: 2



## Transport

Minibus



## Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader  
Cook  
Driver(s)  
Trek Crew



## Accommodation

1 nights simple camping  
2 nights standard hotel  
1 nights simple village house

# Trip information

## Country information

### Morocco Holidays & Tours

#### Climate

The climate is both Mediterranean and Atlantic. The dry, hot season is from May to October when summer temperatures can reach 38°C and above (if sight seeing is included we will do our best to avoid the heat of the day during this period). Temperatures may drop significantly at times during the night as the day's heat rapidly diminishes. From December to January snow can be expected on mountain passes and it can be wet. In winter, day temperatures will probably be around 18-25°C, dropping to perhaps 0-5°C.

#### Time difference to GMT

0

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

#### Religion

Islam

#### Language

Arabic, Berber, French.

## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

Marrakech - A guided tour through the vibrant city of Marrakech, the iconic Djemma El Fna, the souks and medina £6 (dependant on the schedule of your flights).

### Clothing

In the highlands conditions are generally dry and sunny during the day but bring warm clothing such as a warm fleece, thermal underwear, warm hat and gloves for cooler nights in the mountains when temps drop dramatically. You will also need to bring waterproofs in case the weather changes, particularly at the start and end of the season. Morocco is a Muslim country and it is

important to dress with respect for local customs. People may be offended by shorts or revealing dresses, which can attract unwelcome attention. We advise that in general both men and women should cover shoulders, upper arms and knees. Transparent, 'plunging' necklines and tightfitting clothes should be avoided. Women should also cover their heads when entering a sanctuary, though in general, mosques are forbidden to non-Muslims. For those clients on a cycling holiday please bear this information in mind for times that you are not on the bikes. While cycling it is no problem for both men and women to wear your regular cycling gear, tight fitting or not.

## Footwear

Trainers or shoes are useful for relaxing of an evening.

## Luggage

15Kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a rucksack which will be used for a daypack. It is preferable to bring your luggage in soft holdalls rather than a large suitcase - as it is easier to pack them on the vehicles and the mules. It will be possible to store unrequired and additional luggage at the hotel or with our agent in Marrakech during the trek.

## Equipment

Bring a 3-season sleeping bag (during May and Sept you will need a 4 season bag), torch, high factor sunscreen and sunglasses. You may also like to bring your own sleeping mat/thermarest for your own comfort although foam mats can be provided locally. Trekking poles are recommended, particularly for the descent from the summit of Toubkal.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

### Local crew

Local Crew: Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow approx. £12 for tipping of crew and local guides used. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

## Country Information

### Morocco Holidays & Tours

#### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

##### Dinner price

£5.00 - 8.00

##### Beer price

£2.5

##### Water price

£0.6

#### Foreign Exchange

##### Local currency

Moroccan Dirham (MAD).

##### Recommended Currency For Exchange

US Dollars, Sterling and Euros are readily exchangeable. We recommend you take a mixture of cash and credit cards. Scottish bank notes and Australian dollar travellers cheques and cash are NOT normally accepted in Morocco.

##### Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you.

**ATM Availability**

ATMs are available in main towns/cities, though can be unreliable.

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Not all places.

**Travellers Cheques**

Travellers cheques are difficult to exchange and are not recommended.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Minibus

### Accommodation notes

**Booking a Single Room**

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Morocco is a developing country and as such, the accommodation standards are not equivalent to those in Europe and can be more basic. We generally choose our properties because of their location, cleanliness, traditional style or for their welcoming atmosphere, as we endeavour to provide an authentic Moroccan experience. However, some of the properties might have some outdated or simple furniture and the level of service may vary depending on the location. You may find that availability of hot water is variable or limited in certain locations. Breakfasts are generally continental style. A swimming pool is often available, especially in the cities.

## Essential information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

**Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### Visa Information

Morocco: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.



## Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

## Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## Maximum altitude (m)

4167

## Altitude information

This trip goes to an altitude where there is a risk of being affected by Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), a common and usually harmless condition caused by reduced air pressure and a lower concentration of oxygen. Whilst the itinerary has been specifically designed to allow your body to acclimatise gradually, the speed of onset and severity - as well as the height at which AMS develops can vary greatly between individuals; being physically fit affords no special protection. If symptoms occur while on tour you must let your tour leader know immediately. For further advice when travelling at altitude we recommend visiting the medical advice website of "Medex" and downloading their information booklet: [http://medex.org.uk/medex\\_book/english\\_version.php](http://medex.org.uk/medex_book/english_version.php) Travellers with heart or lung conditions, anaemia, asthma, high blood pressure, or taking the contraceptive pill must seek the advice of their GP and specifically mention the maximum altitude the trip reaches (please refer to Tour Essentials box on front page of your Tour Notes). Please take these to your medical appointment so that your doctor has the full details of your trip. You must have adequate travel insurance for your trip. Please ensure that your insurance policy covers you to the maximum altitude indicated above. If you have Explore insurance you will be covered to this altitude.

## Morocco Holidays & Tours



**Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria.

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