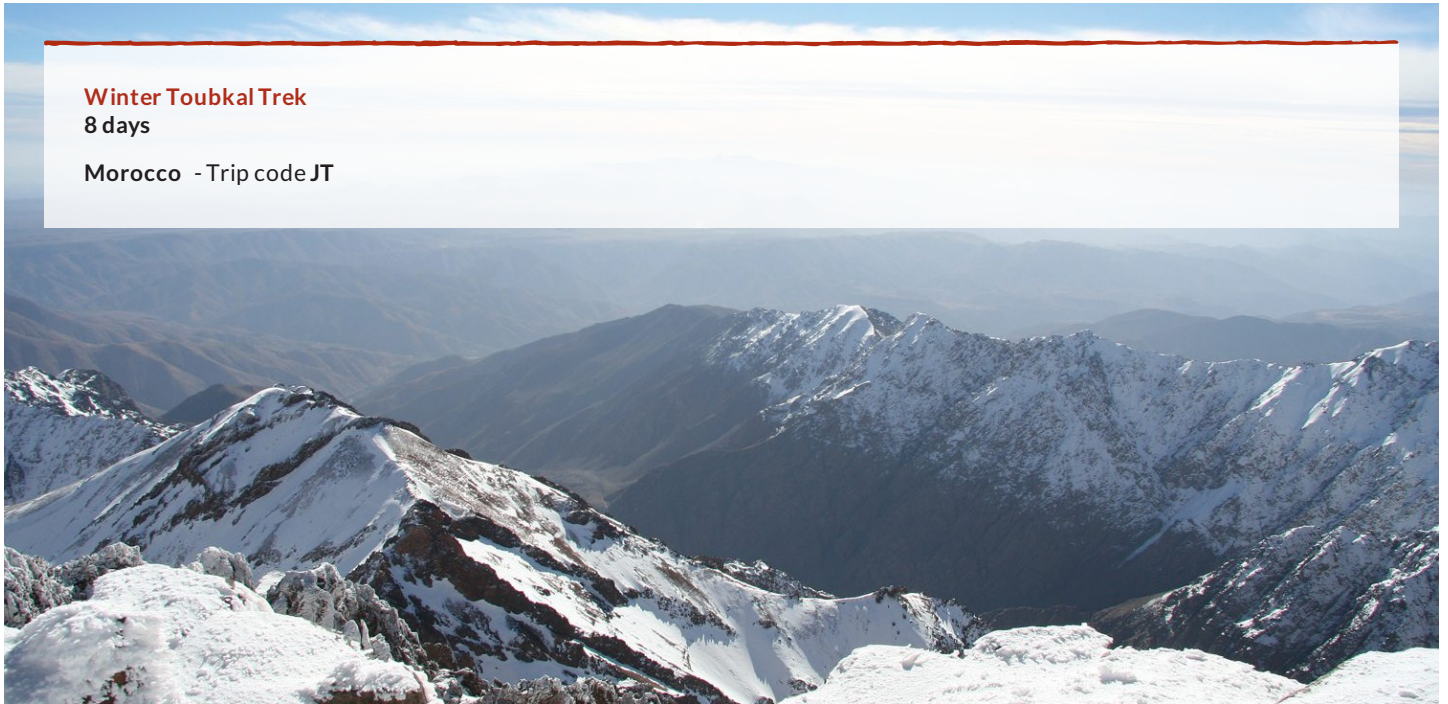


# EXPLORE!

## Winter Toubkal Trek

8 days

Morocco - Trip code JT



## Winter Toubkal Trek

With the snow-capped peaks of Morocco's High Atlas Mountains providing an impressive backdrop, we make an exhilarating climb to the summit of Jebel Toubkal (4167m), North Africa's highest peak. On a clear day we enjoy winter views from the summit across the Atlas range and over the Sahara Desert. En route we discover local villages and experience Berber hospitality. On our return we also explore the souks and medina of the bustling city of Marrakech.

## Trip highlights

### 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 To Tough

A blend of challenging and tough grade treks, this level suits experienced and fit hikers who are confident trekking for long periods on difficult terrain and at high altitudes, with demanding ascents and descents.

## Itinerary

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

## DAY 1 - Join tour Marrakech

Join your tour in Marrakech. The city 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. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may be able to start exploring the souks of the Red City independently before meeting your group and Tour Leader at the hotel.



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



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 2 - Drive to Imlil and trek to Aremd (2000m)

After most of the morning free in Marrakech, we leave the city behind and drive south 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. Here we leave our vehicle and in the company of our tour leader, assistant mountain guide and cook, head along the Mizane Valley towards the Berber village of Aremd (2000m). 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 and we will have a chance to explore something of the village en route to our overnight accommodation, stopping for a refreshing mint tea along the way. Please be aware that our village accommodation will be basic, with shared facilities and dormitory style rooms. Today's one and a half kilometre walk is expected to take around one hour with a total ascent of 210 metres'



**Accommodation: Aremd Village House** (or similar)



Simple Village House



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 3 - Trek to Neltner Refuge (3207m) via Sidi Chamharouch

This morning we meet up with our mules and muleteers for the continuing journey through the mountains. Heading east and crossing 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 Chamharouch (2340m), 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 besides a small waterfall and presents a jumbled cluster of houses that seem to melt together into a chaotic mass along the valley walls. Continuing up into the snow-line it will take us another 5 hours to reach the refuge. After a chance to rest we'll then do another equipment check, practising on the surrounding snow covered slopes and receiving some basic instruction on the use of crampons and ice axes from our mountain guide. Today's nine and a half kilometre walk is expected to take around five hours with a total ascent of 1257 metres.



**Accommodation: Neltner Mountain Refuge** (or similar)



Simple Mountain Refuge

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 4 - Ascend Jebel Toubkal (4167m)

If conditions are right this morning we will make our first attempt on the summit of Jebel Toubkal, North Africa's highest mountain. It will be an early start, a long day and a steep climb, as we make our way up a meandering track of snow and scree to our first stopping point at 3700m. From here we turn left, following the slope up to the South Col of Tizi n' Toubkal (3975m), from where we follow the snowy ridge to the summit. Depending upon snow conditions, the journey to the top should take us around 4 hours and once we hit the summit the views that greet us are simply breathtaking. On a clear day you can see the entire Toubkal range, right down to the plains of Haouz surrounding Marrakech. To the north lie the white giants of the High Atlas and to the south, 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. Descending to the Neltner Refuge from here, the journey back should take us around 2.5 hours, where a late lunch will be waiting for us. Today's four and a half kilometre walk is expected to take around six hours with a total ascent of 967 metres and a descent of 967 metres.



**Accommodation: Neltner Mountain Refuge** (or similar)

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Simple Mountain Refuge

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 5 - Ascent of Mount Ouanoukrim (4086m)

Assuming conditions yesterday were right for the ascent of Jebel Toubkal, this morning you may like to attempt the nearby peak of Ouanoukrim, a more demanding climb than Toubkal with some steep, exposed sections of rock and snow. Departing the lodge early, we follow a gradually climbing path that takes us towards Tizi n'Ouanoums and then on to Tizi n'Ouagane (3750m). Chances are we will encounter snow for much of the journey and, as we begin the ascent to the top from Tizi n'Ouagane, we will have to negotiate a rocky track that may require some scrambling. Once past this section though, the route to the top then continues along a steadily climbing slope of snow and scree to the summit, from where we are rewarded with more spectacular views across the Anti Atlas and the Sahara. Enjoying a picnic lunch en route, the entire journey should take us around 8 hours, depending on conditions. Today's six kilometre walk is expected to take around eight hours with a total ascent of 882 metres and a descent of 882 metres.



**Accommodation: Neltner Mountain Refuge** (or similar)

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Simple Mountain Refuge

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 6 - AM trek to Tizi Ouanoums Pass (3650m), then descend to Aremd via Neltner

This morning we follow the same initial route as for Ouanoukrim before turning left up a steep gorge to Tizi Ouanoums, a viewpoint affording stunning views down towards the still waters of Lac D'ifni. The total journey should take us around 3 hours, returning to Neltner for lunch. Afterwards we turn our back on the mountain for the last time and head back down to Aremd, arriving in the village late this afternoon. Depending on our arrival time, there may be time for an optional visit to the local hammam. Today's 13.5 kilometre walk is expected to take around seven hours with a total ascent of 400 metres and a descent of 1650 metres.



**Accommodation: Aremd Village House** (or similar)

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 Simple Village House

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 7 - Trek to Imlil. Drive back to Marrakech

Trekking back to Imlil this morning we rejoin our vehicles and drive back to Marrakech, where on arrival the rest of the day is free 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 water-sellers. Marrakech is divided into two distinct parts, the Gueliz (or modern French-built city) and the Medina (the Old City) and there is the option to take an afternoon walking tour around the souks with a local guide, visiting the museum and the elegant Koutoubia mosque and tower, reputed to be the most perfect Islamic monument in North Africa. Alternatively you may prefer to spend your final afternoon independently exploring this maze of narrow streets, enjoying the sounds, colours and smells of the exotic and perhaps haggling for some last minute presents. Or perhaps you'll prefer just sitting in a local café and watching the street tableaux unfold before you. Today's one and a half kilometre walk is expected to take around 45 minutes with a total descent of 210 metres.



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


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 Standard Hotel

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 Swimming pool available

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 8 - Tour ends Marrakech

The tour ends today in Marrakech. Depending on the schedule of your flights you may wish to spend some additional time wandering in the market and buying your last souvenirs before departure.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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# Walking and Trekking information

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## DAILY DISTANCES

Day 2	1.5km
Day 3	9.5km
Day 4	4.5km
Day 5	6km
Day 6	13.5km
Day 7	1.5km

Optional Walks

### Walking grade

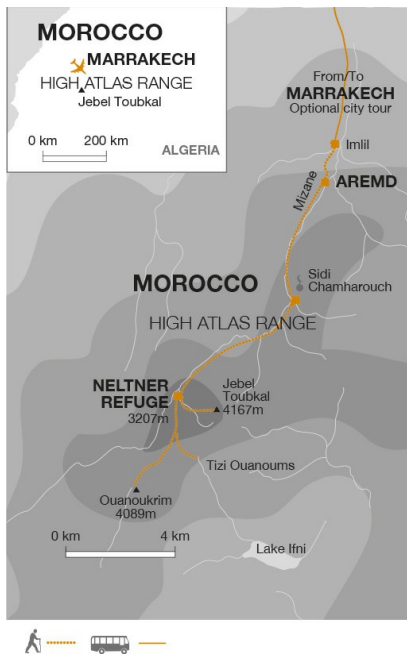
Challenging to tough

### Trek details

This is a 4-day trek with an average of 6 to 8 hours walking each day, and an additional optional walk on Day 5. It is recommended that you know how to use an ice axe and crampons. We reach a maximum altitude of 4167m and have graded this trip as challenging to tough. We follow the Ikhibi Sud route up the mountain, trekking up the north side. This is the main trekking route as it catches a path through a U shaped valley towards the Toubkal Pass before continuing to the ridge and the summit. There is an alternative south side route but this is steeper and has more difficult narrow sections.

### Max walking altitude (m)

4167



# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 7  
Lunch: 5  
Dinner: 5



## Transport

Minibus



## Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader  
Cook  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)  
Muleteer(s)



## Accommodation

2 nights standard hotel  
3 nights simple mountain refuge  
2 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

Aremd - Local hammam approx. £4 Marrakech - Walking tour of city £6 pp

### Clothing

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

We recommend you bring strong and waterproof mountain trekking boots with stiff sole; crampons; inner socks and thick socks (ski type); spare boot laces; gaiters; trainers for mountain hut. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or sandals for relaxing and general wear. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

## Luggage

15Kg

## Luggage: On tour

We suggest that you bring a soft, waterproofed holdall/barrel bag that will be carried by mules on trek and good size waterproofed daysack plus a small holdall to store unneeded items in Marrakech. Pack mules are used to carry equipment, food and most personal gear. To ensure the well being of the mules please do not over pack your luggage. Pack heavy/dense items into your kitbag. It will be possible to store surplus baggage not required on the trek at the hotel in Marrakech. Don't forget that your bag will be carried by porters so please pack lightly.

## Equipment

Ice axe (non-technical winter trekking axe with long handle); 3/4-season sleeping bag; warm jacket (ideally down jacket); warm trousers; wind and waterproof jackets and trousers; warm midlayer; warm hat and face protection (balaclava); warm and waterproof gloves/mittens; thermal underwear; sunglasses and ski goggles; high factor sunscreen and lip protection; head torch and spare batteries; water bottle (minimum 1litre); insulated bottle; washcloth/mall towel; wet wipes; toilet paper; anti-bacterial handwash; plastic bags; personal first aid kit. Please note that an ice axe and crampons can be hired locally for MAD300 (approx. £20) each for the duration of the trip. Please advise us if you would like to hire this equipment locally so we may add a note to your booking.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

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

### Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized 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. 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. Accordingly, you should allow approx. £25 for tipping of crew and local guides used.

## 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. On day two and six you stay in a traditional Berber village house. There are number of twin or triple rooms with shared facilities, and a communal area for eating socialising, and roof terrace too. All bedding is provided. These are a fantastic way to meet the local Berber people and gain an insight into their lives. Day three you stay at Neltner refuge. The rooms are basic dorm rooms with bunk beds (ear plugs recommended!). There is no bedding provided. There are shared toilet facilities (take your own toilet roll). There are showers, which may or may not be hot. There's a dining room and large lounge area with a wood burning stove, where everyone gathers and socialises in the evening. Please be prepared to pay extra for the hot showers, wood (for the fire) and bottles of water. It's a great way to meet like-minded trekkers from all over the world.

## 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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