

EXPLORE!



DISCOUNTED

Winter Toubkal Trek

MOROCCO - TRIP CODE JT

WALKING AND TREKKING

Why book this trip?

This winter trekking trip in Morocco takes you among the snow-capped peaks and stunning landscape of the Atlas Mountains to the summit of Jebel Toubkal. On a clear day enjoy views across the Atlas range and towards the Sahara Desert.

- **Jebel Toubkal** - Ascend to the summit of the highest peak in North Africa (4,167m)
- **Berber Villages** - Discover remote villages and meet the hospitable local people
- **Marrakech** - Explore the souks and medina of this lively ancient city



INCLUDED MEALS

Breakfast: 7
Lunch: 5
Dinner: 5

TRIP STAFF

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

TRANSPORT

Minibus

ACCOMMODATION

2 nights premium
hotel
3 nights simple
mountain refuge
2 nights simple
village house

WALKING

GRADE:
Challenging To
Tough

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

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:

Hotel Almas (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL 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)

Grade: 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)

Grade: Simple Mountain Refuge



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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)

Grade: Simple Mountain Refuge



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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)

Grade: Simple Mountain Refuge



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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)

Grade: Simple Village House



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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 on-and-a-half kilometre walk is expected to take around 45 minutes with a total descent of 210 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Almas (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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

Trip information

Country information

Morocco

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	Plugs	Religion	Language
0	2 Pin Round	Islam	Arabic, Berber, French.

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Marrakech:

- A guided tour through the city, into the souks, around the medina and past the iconic Djemma El Fna £15 (dependent on the schedule of your flights)
- Bahia Palace entrance fee 70. MAD (approx. £6)
- Saadien Tombs entrance fee 70. MAD (approx. £6)
- Aremd - Local hammam approx. £5

Clothing

Bring light and comfortable clothing that can be layered according to the temperature. The weather conditions in the mountains can be changeable, and it will be cold, especially at night, so bring warmer layers. Tops made from wicking materials which keep you drier and warmer are recommended as a base layer, and walking trousers are preferable to trousers of heavier material such as jeans.

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.

-Warm jacket and trousers - After sunset and before sunrise, temperatures can fall. A warm jacket and long warm trousers are the most convenient way of keeping warm, a down jacket is recommended.

-Breathable wind and waterproof jackets and trousers - Material such as Goretex not only protects against rain and wind, but also stops you from overheating. They 'breathe' and avoid condensation that

you will experience from nylon waterproofs.

-Thermal underwear/base layers - Long sleeve tops and long john legging thermal underwear, cotton clothing like t-shirts are not suitable or recommended as a base layer as they do not wick away any moisture from the skin.

-Socks - It is best to wear a pair of liner socks under a pair of fairly thick loop stitch socks. This helps to protect your feet against blisters. Avoid nylon socks, they are abrasive, don't breathe well and can cause blisters

-Waterproof gloves; a warm scarf & a warm hat - Warm and windproof gloves or mittens are essential. Also bring a scarf to cover your neck and a warm balaclava or a warm hat.

-T-shirts

-Long sleeved tops

-Long trousers

-Warm midlayer/ fleece

-Swimwear for the pool at the hotel

Footwear

We recommend you bring strong and waterproof mountain trekking boots with a stiff sole.. 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.

Crampons - Bring your own if you have them or these can be hired locally for MAD300 (approx. £20) each for the duration of the trip. They can go on any type of walking boot. Please advise us if you would like to hire this equipment locally so we may add a note to your booking.

Gaiters are useful to keep snow and scree out of your boots and bringing spare boot laces is advised.

You may choose to bring trainers which will be useful in villages and general wear.

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. It will be possible to store surplus baggage not required on the trek at the hotel in Marrakech.

Equipment

3/4-season sleeping bag - 4-season comfort rating (temperature -10 degrees celcius to -5 degrees celcius) or a 3-season with a separate liner. A silk or fleece liner helps to keep your bag clean and adds an extra season.

Sunglasses/ ski goggles and high factor sunscreen and lip protection- Essential for protection against UV rays and glare at high altitudes.

Torch/Batteries/Bulb - A small torch is essential for finding things at night, a head torch is advised for the early ascent to the summit. Remember to bring some spare batteries.

Small waterproof dry bag (for items such as your mobile phone)

Reusable water bottle (minimum 1litre) - an insulated bottle is also nice to have for hot drinks.

Personal toiletries - Toothbrush/paste, washcloth or small towel, wet wipes, toilet paper, anti-bacterial hand wash

Personal first aid kit - On each trek a first aid kit is carried but you should have your own blister kit, supply of plasters, aspirin and other essentials. Please do not give medicines to local staff without consulting the tour leader.

Trekking poles are recommended, particularly for the descent from the summit of Toubkal.

Ice axe (non-technical winter trekking axe with long handle)

Please note that an ice axe 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.

Equipment Hire and Trek Training Days in the UK - Trek Hire UK hire out a wide range of kit including quality sleeping bags, down jackets, walking poles and crampons. <http://www.trekhireuk.com>. They also run regular trek training and preparation days from their base in the Surrey Hills, ideal for getting an indication of your overall fitness level and also covering advice on kit and altitude.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

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, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow £30.00 per person for group tipping.

Morocco

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.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£6.00 - 8.00	£8.00 - 12.00	£2.5	£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

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.

For 2020 departures we have upgraded the hotel in Marrakech, located in the new city centre with a half hour walk to the main Jamaa El Fna Square. The hotel has a rooftop swimming pool and a restaurant, the rooms are air conditioned.

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport 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.

UK passport holders are requested to have at least 3 months validity from the date of entry into Morocco. All other nationalities please check with your nearest embassy for requirements of passport validity.

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 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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 complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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

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

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. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is

not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Walking and Trekking information



Walking grade

Challenging to tough

Trek details

Trek on 3 days for between 5 and 7 hours. Snow and ice underfoot, ice axe and crampons are used, it is recommended that you know how to use these. 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



**AWARD WINNING
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