

Berber Trek to Mount Toubkal, Morocco

A unique trek, avoiding the busiest trails, to North Africa's highest peak - Jebel Toubkal.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Trekking Peak
Accommodation	Hotel/Riad, Mountain huts, Camping
Grade	Vigorous
Duration	12 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 9 days
Min/Max group size	5 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 5
Trip Leader	Local Leader Morocco
Land only	Joining in Marrakesh, Morocco
Max altitude	4,167m/13,671ft, Jebel Toubkal, day 8

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



tel: +44 (0)1453 844400 fax: +44 (0)1453 844422 info@mountainkingdoms.com www.mountainkingdoms.com

Departures

Group departures

2022 Dates:

Wed 11 May - Sun 22 May

Tue 02 Aug - Sat 13 Aug

Tue 06 Sep - Sat 17 Sep

Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 5 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

Your guide



The trip will be led by a qualified Berber guide who is ideally placed to give you an insight into and information about their country, especially as much of this tour runs through the Berber, or Tachelhit speaking parts of Morocco. The Moroccan government closely controls the appointment of both mountain and town guides. Your guide will have completed a year of training at the Centre for Mountain Guides in Tabant in the Central High Atlas. During their training, guides complete courses in First aid, Geography, History and the Natural science of Morocco as well as testing their fitness.

Our Moroccan leaders are selected on the basis of their experience, levels of spoken English and helpfulness. Like the Berber culture from which they come they are all very welcoming and have a love of showing you their country.

Your trip highlights

- Carefully planned east-west traverse specially designed by Mountain Kingdoms to offer quieter trails, excellent acclimatisation and cultural interest
- Comfortable camping with good quality tents, chairs and dining table, tasty locally sourced food, plus hot showers en route
- Delightful riad in the heart of Marrakesh and gite accommodation on two nights of the trek
- Highly experienced and fully qualified Berber guides

At a glance itinerary

Day 1	Fly to Marrakesh. Transfer to a Riad in Marrakesh.
Days 2-4	Drive to Setti Fatma and begin the trek. Walk through terraced farmland and villages rarely visited by tourists.
Day 5	Trek to Amsouzerte.
Days 6-7	Trek to Lac d'Ifni and over the high pass, Tizi n'Ouanoumss, 3,664m/12,022ft, to the Neltner Refuge.
Day 8	Ascend Jebel Toubkal, 4,167m/13,671ft.
Days 9-10	Trek to Tizi Oussem via the Aguelzim ridge. Continue on to Tessa Ouirgane and end trek.
Days 11-12	Drive to Marrakesh. Tour of the souks. Transfer to Marrakesh airport for flight to UK.

Trip summary

At 4,167m/13,671ft high, Jebel Toubkal is the main, but by no means the only objective on this trekking holiday. Whilst some may be content to try and 'bag', North Africa's highest peak in a long weekend, our unique itinerary avoids the busiest trails and immerses you in the land of the Berbers.

Leaving Marrakesh, you make a short drive to a valley in the heart of the High Atlas to begin your traverse of the Toubkal Massif. You trek from the east through isolated valleys, crossing high passes and camping in high pastures or by rushing streams. In the village of Amsouzerte, you enjoy the added comfort of a local Gite (mountain refuge) before trekking on via the turquoise waters of Lac D'Ifni to cross the Tizi n'Ouanoumss Pass at 3,664m/12,021ft. Fit and acclimatised, it is now a straightforward climb to the summit of Toubkal, which rewards you with views over the High and Middle Atlas and occasionally the Sahara beyond. Over two more trekking days, you complete our traverse westward, enjoying a traditional Mechui feast and perhaps a hammam (steam bath) before leaving the trail for a comfortable hotel on the edge of the mountains. Finally, you return to Marrakesh for an evening experiencing the sights and sounds of this most atmospheric of cities, and some free time on your last day.

This itinerary is carefully planned to maximise the acclimatisation necessary for trekking at altitudes above 3,000 metres/9,843ft. Typically you can expect to be trekking for 5-6 hours each day, but there is also time to rest and relax. You will trek with a local Berber guide, a cook and a crew of muleteers, whose mules will carry the camp equipment and your kit bags. Passing through plenty of Berber villages and small settlements you will have lots of opportunity to meet the local people and gain an insight into their way of life.

Special notes

Climbing Mount Toubkal

What it is?

North Africa's highest mountain - at 4,167m/13,671ft

What it entails:

Mainly walking on good but rough and stony paths

Steep ascents and descents as you cross a number of high cols

On the summit day, a steep walk on a good path up scree/rocky slopes

What experience and skills are required:

Experience of walking in the UK's high mountains, e.g. Snowdonia, Lake District, Western Highlands

Good degree of physical fitness and stamina

Technical gear needed:

None - you just need regular hill walking gear

Trekking poles may be useful on steeper terrain

Good quality head torch for the final ascent

Summer temperatures

In the June to August period there is a possibility of very hot weather even at altitude, so precautions should be taken to keep cool and hydrated and the guide may, in exceptionally hot days, change the route for one with more shade.

Animal welfare

We work with an excellent partner in Morocco who care about the mules and horses that they use for portering gear on the trek. They apply strict weight limits and have specially designed harnesses to distribute weight evenly and to prevent saddle sores. They do not use metal mouth bits and make certain that the mules and horses are well fed and watered. All the horses and mules are regularly checked by a vet.

An extra mule

On this trek an extra mule is taken that can be occasionally used as a riding animal or as a back up for emergencies.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Fly London to Marrakesh. Group transfer to hotel.

Marrakesh airport is only 7km from the old city centre and it's therefore just a short transfer to your overnight hotel.

Overnight: Riad Palais De Princesses or Riad Challa or Similar, Marrakesh

Day 2: Drive to Setti Fatma - 1½ hours. Trek to Assaka, 2,100m/6,890ft - 5 hours.

After breakfast you board your transport for the 1½ hour drive to the trailhead. For 45 minutes, the road south crosses the empty plains, the outline of the High Atlas becoming gradually more apparent. After another 15 minutes there is a turn off to Oukaïmeden, Morocco's largest ski area, and then it is half an hour through the increasingly lush Ourika valley to Setti Fatma. This trailhead at the eastern end of the High Atlas has always been popular with the Moroccans but foreign tourists traditionally have centred around the increasingly busy town of Imlil. The fertility of the valley is immediately apparent with stores selling boxes of apricots, plums, melons, cherries, oranges and apples. You will probably go on another kilometre to the end of the track at Agadir n-Ait Boulmane, 1,498m/4,915ft, to pick up the mules. This is a most attractive Berber village, busy with women returning from the fields laden with bundles of long grass for the cattle. From here it is about a five hour walk to your first camp.

The valley from here to camp at Assaka is along what the locals refer to as "the gorges". The locals are happy to wander along the valley bottom enjoying the shade of the trees, the running water and the socialising. Of course this means a lot of walking along the sides of irrigation channels, hopping from boulder to boulder, and crossing bridges made of little more than sticks and rocks. For you, the mule path is a better option, climbing well up out of the gorges and giving you your first views of the surrounding landscape. Soon after the mule track climbs high up on the left hand side of the valley. The Berber village of Tamatert, 1,655m/5,430ft, is reached after another hour or so. The route up to the Tizi n'Tamatert is now very apparent, winding up through increasing numbers of Juniper trees, and bringing you to a pass on a rocky ridge with fine scrambly viewpoints. From here, the short trek back down into the valley is clear, as is tomorrow's climb back up and over the Tizi (col) n'Amenzil. It is only half an hour down to camp where the muleteers will be set up, and ready to greet you with a glass of Berber mint tea!

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 3: Trek from Assaka to Azib Tifnoute, 2,417m/7,930ft - 6½ hours.

There's an interesting start to today's trekking as you pass through the village of Amenzil before a long climb up to Tizi n'Imchichki, 2,981m/9,780m, and then a steep drop all the way back down to 2,400m/7,874ft.

It is an hour up to Tizi Amenzil, climbing quickly through juniper trees, whilst the view of yesterday's walk opens up. The first col isn't quite the top, that comes five minutes later with a fine view of the village of Amenzil just a few minutes away, and a long green terraced valley stretching out beyond. Amenzil is rarely visited by tourists, and you may be invited into one of the houses to share mint tea, walnuts and bread dipped in olive oil.



Beyond the village the path climbs steadily up the right hand side of the valley for 45 minutes, following the irrigation channels that come down from the mountains. The fields are full of women working and further up the teenagers will be out herding goats. The valley becomes more barren after the end of the cultivation, and you stop at a small azib (summer goat herders' huts) for lunch below the col at the head of the valley. From here it is an hour to the Tizi n'Imchichki, with 15 minutes on the level before the descent starts. It is almost 600m/1,968ft down to the riverside at Azib Tifnoute. It is a classic Moroccan descent, dry and loose, on which you can descend very quickly if you enjoy scree, or very slowly if you don't!! It'll be around 2 hours before you emerge through the summer villages and out to camp by the riverside. As you head back to your tent after dinner watch out for the giant toads that hop around the rocks!

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 4: Trek to Azib n'Ououraine, approximately 3,000m/9,842ft - 4-4½ hours.

Today you walk through the azibs (summer pastures) of this central High Atlas valley before turning south and climbing to 3,000m/9,842ft to a wild camp just below Tizi n' Ououraine.

A glance at a map reveals over a dozen 'azibs' in the stretch of valley through which you pass this morning. Given its altitude, the valley spends a large part of the year under snow, but come mid-May, hundreds of locals (and thousands of goats) leave their valleys both north and south and head here to the temporary settlements over the summer months. It is a fascinating place to be: it is only when high above that the extent of the terracing becomes apparent, and you see the vibrant green vegetation fed by man-made irrigation channels full of snow-melt.

It is about 2 hours to Azib Tamenzift where the path turns off south. In June along the sides of the paths, red poppies and orchids add colour.

There are two routes to Amsouzerte in the south. The old route via Tizi n'Terhaline and Tissaldai, is prone to landslides and lingering snow and is rarely possible for mules anymore. The more popular route now, and proving fine views south towards the Sahara, is to cross the Tizi N'Ououraine. From the turning it is about a 2½ hour walk up to tonight's camp. Even in June there may still be snow patches hiding from the sun. There are pleasant rock pools along the way and on a hot day these may tempt you into a discreet dip! The small pasture of Azib n'Ououraine where you camp appears suddenly. A short distance up the path through the scree beyond takes you to the pass you cross tomorrow. You are quite high now at 3,000m/9,842ft and it can be cold and windy once the sun has gone down.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 5: Trek to Amsouzerte, 1,797m/5,896ft, via Tizi n'Ououraine, 3,120m/10,236ft, 3-3½ hours. Free afternoon.

It is only 15 minutes to the col, 3,120m/10,236ft, from where you finally enter the southern side of the High Atlas. In clear weather there are fine views south over Jebel Sahro and the desert. Toubkal lies to the right and villages with their vibrant green terracing nestle in the valley below. It is 1,300m/4,265ft, of descent, but the path stays on the crest of the ridge all the way affording great views throughout. The descent can be done in 2½ hours, but it is worth taking time to enjoy it. Tagounite is the first village you descend into and in June the roofs of the houses will be covered in swathes of grass laid out to dry. You may be offered walnuts, or find bags of cherries for sale. You will find yourselves on a track leading into Amsouzerte: the ability to get fruit out to market has brought relative wealth to the valley. In Amsouzerte you will stay at a gîte, have a chance to wash and relax on a roof terrace and watch life go on in the fields. The houses in Amsouzerte are substantial compared to the surrounding areas, often three, or four storeys high with fine views. They are still basic, however, with little more than carpets on the floors, a squat toilet and shower and some electricity. There are basic stores in town and you will find fizzy drinks, fresh orange juice and whatever fruit is in season.

After lunch and a refreshing mint tea, the afternoon is free to enjoy the surroundings. You may want to follow the main track south out of the village. Forty minutes or so of walking takes you through several small villages and almost out of the mountains altogether as you emerge into the desert landscapes around Ouaounzourt and Imlil. You could return up the other side of the valley on the smaller paths.

Overnight: Gîte Hime Omar or Gîte de Tizi Oussem, Ourigane (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: Trek to Azib Imi N'Ouassif, 2,700m/8,858ft, via Lac D'Ifni, 2,312m/7,585ft, 5-5½ hours.

Today's walk is all uphill, climbing from Amsouzerte via Lac d'Ifni for lunch and then on to Azib Imi n'Ouassif in the gorges beyond. The first hour out of Amsouzerte is wonderful walking through busy villages up the Ait Tissili valley. The well graded track passes through Takatert, Tisgouane and finally Tirhaltine. In spring the women are in the fields gathering bundles of grass that they carry on their backs. Well kept terraces are fed via water channels from Lac d'Ifni, hidden from view by what appears to be a dam of rocks.

Poplars and willows thrive in this climate, as do the walnut and chestnut trees. Later in the season you can pick blackberries as you walk.



Takatert is reached in just over an hour and there are several kiosks here that will sell you cold drinks in the shade of the nut trees.

You follow the little path up through the village of Imhiliene joining the zigzags higher up. It is a strange sight as you reach the turquoise blue lake glinting in the sunshine. Current thought is that it was created not by moraine, but by massive rockslides. On the gravel plains on the far side are a few small stone shacks which are reached in the best part of another hour. Lunch is a welcome break. The more adventurous can enjoy a dip in the snow fed waters of the lake. It is possible to camp by the lakeside, but better to head up into the gorges for a while to make the ascent tomorrow easier. About 1½ hours up from the lake is a small azib with just enough room for 8 tents and your mess tent. It is a dramatic spot from where you can just about make out the notch in the horizon through which you pass tomorrow. Mouflon (wild mountain sheep) have been seen here in the past.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Trek to Refuge Neltner, 3,207m/10,522ft, via Tizi n'Ouanoumss, 3,664m/12,021ft, 5-6 hours.

It is a strenuous climb to the Tizi n'Ouanoumss, 3,664m/12,021ft, but ultimately this is a short day reaching Neltner in time for lunch. From camp it is still almost a thousand metres to the col, but the height is gained quickly over a short distance. The path keeps well to the right of the valley avoiding the deepest parts of the gorge and as such the Lac remains out of view for most of the ascent until just before reaching the col. The top is reached in 2½ to 3 hours. There is a direct route on up the ridge to the summit of Toubkal from here, but it involves abseiling and is best left to the experts! The views from here are impressive. Up to the left at the head of the valley is Jebel Ouanakrim, 4,088m/13,412ft, the second highest peak in the Atlas. Directly opposite is the ridge of the Clochetons with the prominent pinnacle of Tadat, 3,755m/12,320ft, in the middle.

The descent from the col down into the upper Mizane valley is short and steep, but on a well-built zigzag path. It takes about half an hour down to reach the valley bottom and then another half an hour along the valley floor to the Neltner Mountain Refuge. A second refuge has been built here in recent years alongside the original French Alpine Club hut. This brings capacity in the huts alone to well over 200 people and the place always seems busy. There is also a new building for muleteers and even their mules have shelter downstairs for when it gets cold.

We choose to camp on the terraces in front of the new hut. This allows you to enjoy the privacy of your tents (rather than large dormitories) whilst using the toilets and showers of the refuge. The afternoon can be spent relaxing ahead of tomorrow's summit bid.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Ascent of Jebel Toubkal, 4,167m/13,671ft - 5-5½ hours.

Your goal today is the ascent of Jebel Toubkal, 4,167m/13,671ft, the highest mountain in North Africa. It is traditional to make a start before 7am, not just to avoid ascending in the heat of the day, but also because clouds tend to build up around the mountain after midday, frequently obscuring the views. The route up via the south cwm is the normal route and is predominantly scree and boulder although they are reasonably firm underfoot. The route reaches a col, the Tizi n'Toubkal, 3,940m/12,926ft, in just over 2 hours, from where there are fine views south, and continues up just below the ridge summing normally in just over 3 hours.



The most notable feature of the summit is a large metal pyramidal structure. The views extend well south towards Jebel Sahro and Siroua and whilst in mid-summer they are usually restricted by heat haze, the spring and autumn are generally much clearer with cloud inversions common in September and October. The mountain could be descended in a couple of hours, returning the way you ascended. However, unlike many other groups on the mountain you have time to make a far more satisfying traverse of the mountain, descending via the north cwm. This is a much quieter route and passes the satellite peak of Tibherine, 4,010m/13,156ft, on which still lie the scattered remains of a light aircraft that crashed back in the 1970s. Owing to the early start, lunch will be back at camp followed by an afternoon relaxing.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Trek from refuge to Tizi Oussem, 1,850m/6,069ft, via Aguelzim Ridge, 3,600m/11,811ft, 5½ hours.

The vast majority of people who climb Toubkal descend on the main mule track, via Sidi Chamharouch, to the roadhead at Imlil. Your route out over the ridge of Aguelzim to the west provides access to the picturesque and well populated valley of Azzadene and the village of Tizi Oussem (1,850m/6,069ft). It is unusual in the Atlas Mountains to find a path in such good condition that traverses long stretches of hillside offering magnificent views north.

Toubkal dominates the view. Further up, the route opens up to fine traversing stretches, passing several false summits before its high point on the Aguelzim ridge at 3,600m (11,811ft) after 1¾-2 hours. Besides the pinnacles of the Clochetons behind you, you have a full 360 degree panorama with the busy valleys of Aremd and Ouakaimeden ahead of you and Marrakesh in the haze beyond. Behind to the west is the Tazarhart plateau.

Part of the path down can clearly be seen descending through the valleys towards the Lepiney Refuge. 15mins uphill will take you to the refuge, also known as the Tazarhart refuge, a French Alpine Club hut with bunks for 20, where you can buy fizzy drinks and water if the guardian is around, and enjoy them surrounded by a ring of 4,000M peaks. With 1,000m/3,281ft still of descent to Tizi Oussem, now clearly visible down the valley, the path continues to lose height quickly, passing the Cascades d' Irhoulidens and a surprisingly large waterfall tucked away in the gorge, and emerging into civilisation at the campsite and Azib of Tamsoult. This makes a good lunch spot with fine views, grassy terraces and cold drinks.

After lunch, 3km of well graded path traverses the valley side for 1½ hours through juniper trees before reaching your goal for the night, your gite at Tizi Oussem. Just before arriving in town, you may see a small plantation of trees on the right where attempts have been made to reintroduce cedars to the area. After eight years the trees are still small and the project has been deemed a failure.

The gite at 1,850m/6,069ft, in the centre of a busy village, enjoys sunshine on its terrace until late into the evening. The rooms, though basic, come with beds and electricity and there are hot showers and even a Hammam. As this is the last evening with the muleteers, it is traditional to have a small celebration and hand out the tips. Your crew will also organise a Mechui (a traditional slow roasted lamb or goat).

Overnight: Gite De Tizi Oussem, Ourigane (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Trek to Tessa Ourigane - 5-5½ hours.

The last day of walking sees the path descend gradually through the valley of Azzadene emerging in the west, near the town of Ourigane. The route out of Tizi Oussem quickly picks up a dirt track heading down the right hand side of the valley towards the villages of Tahaliouine and Tiziane. This is the track that is used in the autumn to ship all the harvested apples out to market in Marrakesh. The track soon diverts off over the Tizi n'Techt towards Asni and your path continues on through the villages.

After a couple of hours, the valley narrows and the path descends into a small gorge leaving the panorama of 4000m peaks behind you. The temperature is warmer and the vegetation different here. Below 1,500m/4,921ft oaks replace juniper, though the oaks are almost unrecognisable from ours. Olive trees abound and kids beat drums across the valley to scare the birds off the cherry trees. If you are walking this way in June, the Oleanders are in full pink bloom as the path traverses high on the side of the river valley.

It is about 4½ hours walking to a suitable lunch spot by the side of the river. After a final Moroccan salad, it is just another 30 minutes round the corner to the end of your trek in Tessa Ourigane, where a dirt track arrives from Ourigane itself. Transport will meet you here and your muleteers will unpack your kit bags in readiness for their return home through the mountains.

It is then a short 10-15 minute drive to a comfortable hotel, where you spend your last night in the Atlas Mountains in relative luxury.

Overnight: Hotel Bergerie or Hotel Tatfi (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Drive to Marrakesh - 1¼ hours. Walking tour of souk - 2-3 hours.

It is about 60km/38miles and just over an hour's drive back to Marrakesh. So even after a lie-in and a relaxed breakfast you are still back in town with plenty of time to explore.

On arrival back in the city, you will take a guided walking tour of the maze-like souks. You will see the dyers' souk and the metalworkers' souk as you explore the narrow alleyways and backstreets of one of North Africa's most fascinating cities. A visit to an apothecary, although essentially an opportunity for the proprietors to sell you their wares, offers an interesting insight into the many herbs, spices and oils that Morocco produces. The 'offer' to buy usually follows a short presentation on the properties of the various concoctions but is markedly less hard-sell than that of the carpet shops - you have been warned! Although the souk is the place for souvenir and gift shopping you may wish to use this morning simply to get your bearings and learn a little about the essential art of haggling.



This afternoon you are free to explore at leisure. Marrakesh has a number of interesting sights to see including Les Jardins Majorelle - Yves St Lauren's celebrated gardens; the Saadian Tombs and the Bahia Palace. As the evening draws in, you might enjoy a traditional steam bath in one of the many hammams, hidden down narrow side alleys, or take a caleche (horse drawn carriage) ride around the city walls and enjoy a freshly squeezed orange juice in the main square, the D'Jemma El Fna. As the sun sets, this enormous open area at the edge of the souks begins to fill with open air food stalls, story tellers, snake charmers and dancers. This nightly ritual of exotic sounds and smells draws locals and tourists alike. Take a wander through the crowds or enjoy people-watching from one of the cafes overlooking the scene.

Overnight: Riad Palais de Princesses or Riad Challa or Similar, Marrakesh (Meals: B)

Day 12: Group transfer to airport. Fly to London.

This morning, after breakfast, you'll transfer back to the airport for your flight to the UK. **(Meals: B)**

Our grading system

Berber Trek to Mount Toubkal is graded as a Vigorous trekking peak holiday, as described below.

Vigorous

Typically these trips involve 8 to 14 days (occasionally more) trekking in relatively remote landscapes. High passes up to 4,900m/16,000ft may be crossed (sometimes snow-covered) and there may also be glacier travel and peak ascents. Walking days can be between 5 and 8 hours with considerable ascents and descents. This grade also covers some European treks of shorter durations. Overnight stops on trek could be in tea houses, mountain huts or camping.

These holidays would suit enthusiastic hill/mountain walkers.

Trip altitude

Important - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend www.medex.org.uk as a good source of information.

What the price includes

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

What's included:

- ✓ A local English-speaking leader
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK (flight inclusive option)
- ✓ Single, timed, group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ Comfortable bed and breakfast riad accommodation in Marrakesh on a twin share basis
- ✓ Comfortable hotel in Ourigane, on twin-share basis
- ✓ Two nights in mountain gites
- ✓ All camping facilities and all meals on trek
- ✓ Camp staff to carry out all camp work
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ Costs of all portage
- ✓ A free high-quality Mountain Kingdoms kit bag
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ The opportunity to attend one of our pre trip meet in the Cotswolds

Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Lunch and evening meals in Marrakesh
- ✗ Tips

Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



Riad Palais De Princesses or Riad Challa or Similar, Marrakesh

This exceptional riad is well located an easy walk to the main square and the souks. It was formerly a princely residence and was restored five years ago with great care to a very high standard. It is a lovely example of 'old Morocco' and has won many awards. It has 23 rooms, a pool, spa, hammam and roof terrace. If this Riad is not available we will use Riad Challa or another riad or hotel of a similar standard.



Camp

On trek you will sleep in good sized two-person ridge/dome tents equipped with foam mattresses. A dining tent with table and stools/chairs will be provided, along with a toilet tent and separate cook tent.



Gite Himi Omar or Gite de Tizi Oussems, Ourigane

During your trek you'll spend two nights in mountain gites. These are basic lodgings, primarily provided for trekkers. Accommodation usually comprises multi-share bedrooms sleeping 4, 6 or more to a room on mattresses (with blankets provided.) There are basic, shared, toilet and washing facilities and usually a lounge/dining room.



Hotel Bergerie or Hotel Tatfi

After your last full day on trek you will stay at the Hotel Bergerie, a really peaceful and relaxing hotel.

Meal arrangements

Bed and Breakfast in Marrakesh. Full board whilst on trek

Flight arrangements

Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

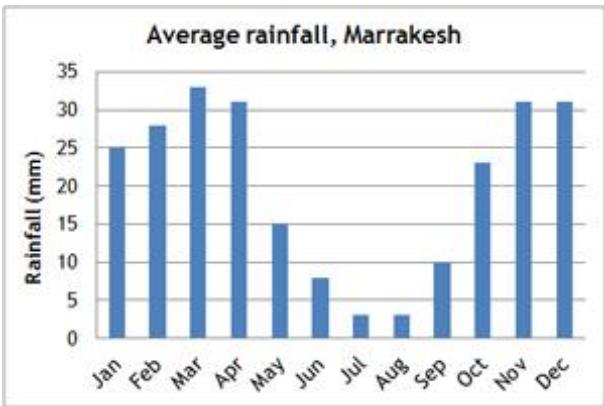
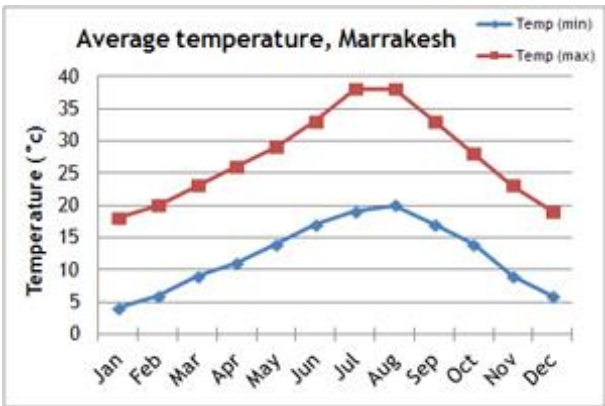
Further information

When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

The nature of adventure travel

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

Climate information



Extensions

Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at www.mountainkingdoms.com.



Additional accommodation in Marrakesh

If you would like to extend your trip to Morocco, we would be happy to arrange additional nights' accommodation in Marrakesh for you, either at the Riad Imlichil, or one of the more luxuriously appointed Riads that have opened up in recent years.

Essaouira

If you would like some seaside relaxation after your trek why not head to the atmospheric town of Essaouira located on Morocco's wild Atlantic coastline. Essaouira has a laid back atmosphere, long sandy beaches, a picturesque fishing port and an impressive ancient fortified Medina.

Our Essaouira extension includes hotel options by the beach or in the Medina and all transfers to and from Marrakesh.



Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- After making the classic ascent of Jebel Toubkal you have time to follow a different descent route and spend an additional night in the mountains. Many groups combine an ascent of Toubkal with a descent all the way to the valley floor and roadhead - making for a very long and tiring day.
- We have included overnight stays at two gites during the trip. This provides additional comfort and a chance to enjoy typical local Berber hospitality.
- In a country where there are many unqualified guides operating, we employ only trekking guides and city guides, as appropriate, who are fully licensed by the Moroccan authorities.
- Morocco is a country rich in cultural interest. We have specially designed this itinerary so that in addition to enjoying a challenging trek, you will spend time in Berber villages and experience first hand the day to day life of this hardy people.
- We do not cut corners on our service and include many small touches that add greatly to the trekking experience: good standard camp equipment including chairs/stools and table for meals; access to showers at the Neltner Refuge; and a traditional Meshui feast on trek.
- We care about animal welfare and take several measures to ensure that the mules and horses used to porter gear, are extremely well cared for. This includes strict weight limits, specially designed harnesses, no metal mouth bits and regular veterinary checks.
- We have a maximum groups size of 12 people, this provides for a genuine small group experience and helps reduce the negative aspects often associated with larger trekking groups.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and other exciting activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- We are an IATA accredited agent and work directly with some of the world's major airlines. If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights Manager, April, for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

What our clients say



I enjoyed the opportunity to undertake such an amazing route far from the tourist areas. Also, having a hard working and very knowledgeable guide who could give me a deep insight into Berber culture, organised every aspect of the trip excellently and was very helpful.

-Mrs P, London.

Interesting trek, seemed like an excellently judged itinerary. Good company, excellent trip leaders, trekking cook and team.

-Mr ML, Bristol



We had a great trek and overall the holiday and arrangements were superb- I think it was the best written briefing we have ever had.

-Mrs T, Bristol

Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

Truly independent

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

Complete financial security

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

No Surcharge Guarantee

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

Award winning Responsible Tourism

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Genuine small group travel

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

Loyalty Discount

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

Comprehensive information

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit www.tourismdeclares.com

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

Carbon Offsetting

Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

