

## Sahara Camel Trek, Morocco

Immerse yourself in the dunes and oases of the Southern Morocco desert, enjoy desert sunsets and nights under the stars, and wander the souks of Marrakesh.



### Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

### Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Riad, Hotel, Camping
Grade	Moderate
Duration	9 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 6 days
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader Morocco
Land only	Joining in Marrakesh, Morocco

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



Watch related videos online: [Sahara Camel Trek](#)

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# Departures

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## Group departures

### 2021 Dates:

Sat 06 Feb - Sun 14 Feb

Sat 06 Nov - Sun 14 Nov

### 2022 Dates:

Sat 05 Feb - Sun 13 Feb

Sat 05 Nov - Sun 13 Nov

### 2023 Dates:

Sat 04 Feb - Sun 12 Feb

Sat 04 Nov - Sun 12 Nov

## Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 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

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The trip will be led by a qualified guide who is ideally placed to give you an insight into, and information about, their country. Pictured here is one of our guides (right) with our M.D. Steve Berry.

The Moroccan government closely controls the appointment of both mountain and town guides. 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 visitors their country.

## Special notes

### Drinking water for the Sahara Trek

The cost of drinking water for your desert trek is not included in the price of your holiday. Instead, you will stop at the town of Tagounite, en route to the Sahara, to buy water. We recommend buying 20 litres per person (4 x 5ltr bottles) at a total cost of approximately £3.30/40 MAD per person. The water will be carried by the camels on trek and you can top up your own water bottle in the evenings, or in the mornings.

Our agent in Morocco specifically requests this process as they want everyone on the trek to understand how precious water is in the Sahara. There are no reliable sources of drinking water on this trek, and it is important to understand that showers, and water for clothes washing is simply not at hand. We do feel it is important to understand this and a good way of see the reality of it, is to be buying your own drinking water at the start. The staff will bring you a small bowl of water each morning for brushing your teeth, face washing and possibly brief foot washing.

## Your trip highlights

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- Trek across immense dunes, through abandoned oases and across a deep wadi in the capable company of your expert guide and camel team
- Enjoy incredible desert sunsets and nights under the stars with no light pollution - a stargazing paradise
- Have fresh bread cooked in sand ovens and enjoy traditional Berber cooking on trek
- Return to Marrakesh via the Iriki National Park, the saffron fields of Talouine and the dramatic Tizi n'Test Pass
- Stay in delightful riads and explore flamboyant Marrakesh with guided tours of the souks and the sights

## At a glance itinerary

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Day 1	Fly to Marrakesh. Transfer to riad hotel in the Medina. Sightseeing and welcome dinner.
Day 2	Drive via the High Atlas and Valley of Draa to Mhamid at the edge of the desert. Begin trek.
Day 3	Trek to the tamarisk oases near Daiat Aoutid. Cross Sidi Naji plateau. Option to return trek to visit Marabout Sidi Naji.
Day 4	Trek west to the big dunes of Erg Zaher.
Day 5	Head east to the Wadi Draa and the dunes at Erg Smar.
Day 6	Trek to near Mhamid. Camp.
Day 7	End trek. Drive through the Iriki National Park, visit the saffron town of Talouine. Continue to Ouled Berhil.
Day 8	Drive over the Tizi n'Test Pass, visit the mosque at Tinmel. Return to Marrakesh.
Day 9	Fly back to London.

## Trip summary

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We are delighted to introduce this unique trek that will take you to the western fringes of the Sahara and immerse you in the tranquillity of the wild, uninhabited landscapes of the world's largest desert. Given the searing summer temperatures of the desert, this makes for an ideal trek in the winter months when the days are dry, warm and sunny and the nights cool and clear.

After a tour of the sights of Marrakesh, your desert adventure begins with a scenic, winding drive across the High Atlas Mountains and through the picturesque Valley of Draa to reach the small village of Mhamid, situated right on the edge of the Sahara. Not far from here you meet your experienced trek crew and camel team who will act as your ships of the desert, carrying all the gear and provisions you need to enjoy a full service camping experience during your trek. You may even have the opportunity to take a ride on one of the camels during your desert trek.

Over the course of the next six days you will trek through the Sahara's varied desert scenery: you cross palm groves, tamarisk oases and wide plateau; walk through Wadi Draa, the longest river bed in North Africa; and trek across the seemingly endless sea of sand dunes, climbing to their sandy peaks to enjoy spectacular sunsets over the desert wilderness. Evenings bring a hearty Moroccan meal round the campfire, hand-prepared by your excellent cook, followed by the spectacular nightly star show as you gaze upwards at the vast desert skies free from any light pollution.

At the end of the trek you will take a couple of days to wend your way back to Marrakesh via the Iriki National Park, which is an important stopping off point for many migratory birds, and you would hope to have the chance to spot some interesting wildlife. You then visit the saffron fields at Talouine; a Berber town set in lovely countryside, before driving on to Ouled Berhil where you spend the night in the wonderful Palais Riad Hida. On the final day, you take the high road over the dramatic Tizi n'Test Pass, visiting the Mosque at Tinmel (one of only two in Morocco open to non-Muslims), before finally reaching Marrakesh.

On the night you spend on the way back to Marrakesh, and for your two nights in the city, you will stay in attractive riads of a very high standard. This will give you a more authentic experience and an indulgent taste of Moroccan life.

# Your trip itinerary

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## Day 1: Fly London to Marrakesh.

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Arriving in Marrakesh you will be met at the airport and transferred to your riad accommodation in the heart of the Medina. The journey takes about 15 minutes to get to the old city walls and your driver will get you as near as possible to your overnight accommodation. Riads are converted town houses in the old parts of Moroccan cities, usually down small lanes where no cars or traffic can get to, so often a porter will help you out with luggage and his small cart will be able to take luggage to the riad from the minibus. Riads are built with rooms facing out onto a central courtyard and a garden/pool which is open to the sky, this is for coolness in the heat of the summer. The windows open to the courtyard and there are no windows to the street, as that would be noisy and hot. Often the riad is a haven from the heat and bustle outside, with a terrace where you can relax and have views over the city and the High Atlas Mountains in the distance.

After time to rest and freshen up, you will head out on a guided tour of the famed Djemaa el-Fnaa square and the surrounding souks and palaces of the old medina. Marrakesh is famous for its souks and it's not possible to visit everything in a short tour, however you should have a chance to see the main sights and perhaps do some haggling in the silver, magic or clothing souks.

In the evening there will be a welcome meal in Palais Dar Es Salam, a traditional restaurant in an old converted palace.

**Overnight: Riad Palais De Princesses or Riad Challa or Similar, Marrakesh (Meals: D)**

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## Day 2: Drive to Mhamid via Ouarzazate and the Draa Valley - 450km, 7-8 hours. Start trek.

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You begin your journey to the Sahara with a scenic drive over the High Atlas mountains, including a crossing of the pass of Tizi n Tichka at over 3,000m. The scenery is spectacular with high mountain peaks (often covered with snow until May or June) deep valleys and the twisting road below descending to the town of Ouarzazate. On the way down from the pass, you will go through small villages selling pottery and various fossils recovered from the desert. The town of Ouarzazate is mainly known for being the film capital of Morocco, with many films and TV shows made here or in nearby in Kasbah Ait Benhaddou, including Gladiator, Game of Thrones and Babel.



The journey continues down the Valley of the Draa, which is an oasis of green palms, interspersed with the earthen ruins of Kasbah and fields of Alfafa and other crops. You will stop at the small town of Tagounite to buy the all-important drinking water for your 50 mile trek through the Sahara. It is then not far to the town of Mhamid which itself is starting to be threatened by the advancing sands. Not far from Mhamid you will meet your camel team in the late afternoon and start the trek. You stop to camp near some large dunes and you could easily climb the largest dune nearby for views of the immensity of the desert and to scope out the route for tomorrow.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 3: trek through a tamarisk oasis and cross the Sidi Naji Plateau to camp - 5-6 hours, 11¼ miles trek. Option to trek to Marabout Sidi Naji - 2 hours, 3½ miles.

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After a breakfast served up for you by the cooks, you set out with the camels through the palm groves and tamarisk bushes. Under your feet you will see traces of old field boundaries - the fields long gone, swamped by the Sahara sands creeping northwards. You stop for lunch in a shady palm grove, and the guide will take you to an area where many fossils and shells have been found in the past; perhaps you will discover your own trilobite or shell as the sands shift in the wind revealing prehistoric treasures.

You now really experience being deep in the desert. The scenery is constantly changing, and leaving the old farmland behind, you find yourself alone in vast open plains - a sea of sand dunes - and can barely see the Algerian mountains to your left. Occasional lone acacia trees give brief rests in the shade. Eventually a range of larger dunes appears ahead. You climb the highest dune to find the camp is below on the other side. For those who have the energy, it is a 40 minute walk to visit the shrine of Marabout Sidi Naji.



Pathways through the dunes lead to the square building of the marabout of Sidi Naji, and the ruined city surrounding it can just be seen. Much pottery lies in the ruins. Sidi Naji was a holy man and the ancient marabout was built as a shrine to his memory. This round trip is about 3½ miles and takes 2 hours.

Tonight you will enjoy a delicious dinner under the stars, maybe with some freshly baked bread from sand ovens.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 4: Trek to the dunes of Erg Zaher - 6 hours, 10½ miles trek.**

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This morning you will initially be walking through dunes and then on to flatter terrain where you can see the tamarisk oases on one side and the big dunes of Erg Zaher in the distance (Erg means dune). After lunch you continue your trek towards Erg Zaher, you may come across a large walled-off area that used to be the market area for a weekly souk; long gone and forgotten now, but a mark of the villages and people that used to live here. Eventually you reach the foot of the Erg Zaher range, and see your camp set up ready for your arrival. Tonight you could climb to the top of the nearest dune to see the beautiful sight of the sun setting over the ripple of the dunes, the colour of the sky and the sand changing constantly as the sun slowly sinks.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 5: Trek east through Wadi Draa to dunes at Erg Smar - 5 hours, 7½ miles trek.**

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This is a bit of a shorter day, so you can recover from yesterday's challenging dune walk. However you will still experience various terrains, including sandy areas, dunes and flat, baked earth. After crossing some dunes from Erg Zaher, you will see the wadi of the Draa river - the longest Wadi (dry river bed) in North Africa. After descending into the wadi, you cross between tamarisk groves that are able to survive on the water left behind by the very infrequent rains that flood the wadi every few years. Climbing up the other side you continue to walk on the flat desert floor.



At the end of the day you reach a green spot in the desert, indicating the presence of a well that is used by a farmer to irrigate a few crops and grow some grass. Here the camels can stock up on fresh food and water and the water for the trek can be replenished. The nomad people tending the well are only here for a short time when grass can grow and the heat of the sun is not too intense. You may notice that the surrounding dunes of Erg Smar are much lighter and more golden than the darker orange hues of the Erg Zaher range.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 6: Trek to near Mhamid. Camp in tamarisk groves near Daiat Aoutid - 5 hours, 7 miles trek.**

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Today you start by following the side of the dunes of Erg Smar. You will mainly be trekking on the flat, baked earth which is just as much part of the desert as the dunes, but a lot easier to walk on! There are some small dunes to trek across, and the landscape becomes more and more dotted with tamarisk groves and acacia. This area is prone to sand storms whipping up from the surrounding erg and blowing across the plains, this is where wearing a seche, or long nomad scarf, comes in handy. The guide can show you how to put it on correctly to protect your face from the harsh, abrasive sand. The Nomads here (Ait Atta Tafoukht tribe and Touaregs) are sometimes called the 'blue men', from the blue dye on their faces from these scarves. If there is a clear day, mirages across the desert plain are common.

Tonight is your last night to enjoy the incredible night sky, free from light pollution and sprinkled with the brilliant pinpricks of a million stars.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 7: End trek - 2½ miles, 4½ miles. Drive through the Iriki National Park, visit the saffron town of Talouine - 4 hours driving.**

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It will take about an hour to finish your trek and you will then be met by your 4x4 transport for an interesting drive across the flat desert plain to the Iriki National Park. The park was formed in 1994 to primarily ensure the rehabilitation of the temporary wetlands, which are an important port of call for many migratory birds, including geese and flamingos. The park has the typical desert landscape of south-east Morocco with some of the dunes covered with tamarisk. There is a diverse mixture of wildlife and, if you are very lucky, you may spot bustards, ostriches, Barbary sheep, dorcas gazelles, oryxes and striped hyenas. The park has very few permanent inhabitants, as most of the population are nomadic moving to and fro between summer and winter pastures; these routes unchanged over the centuries. You will then travel on to Talouine, a pretty little Berber town which lies in some lovely scenery around 1,500m above sea level. Talouine is home to Morocco's largest saffron fields and the violet crocuses are harvested for their beautiful red-gold stigma. The harvest takes place from mid-October to mid-November starting at dawn, and it takes around 200 flowers to produce 1 gram of saffron; making it more expensive than gold.

From there we will end the day's travel in the small town of Ouled Berhil, which is one hour's drive further on.

**Overnight: Riad Hida, Ouled Berhil (Meals: B L)**

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**Day 8: Drive over the Tizi n'Test pass, visit the Mosque at Tinmel. Return to Marrakesh - 4-5 hours driving.**

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After breakfast, you begin our final journey towards Marrakesh over the Tizi n'Test Pass. This awe-inspiring pass at 2,092m crosses the Atlas with a steep ascent up a myriad of hairpin bends rising 1,600m in about 30km, affording incredible panoramic vistas of the Tizi n'Test Mountains and the Nfiss River Valley. The road was blasted straight through the Atlas Mountains in the early part of the 20th century by the French to create the first route between Marrakesh and the Souss plain. About 47km further on is the impressive Mosque at Tinmel. It is only one of two mosques open to non-Muslims in Morocco (the other being in Casablanca). It was built in 1156 to commemorate the founder of the Almohad dynasty, Mohamed Ibn Tumart. Tinmel was home to the Almohade Dynasty and the remains of the medieval fortress and the royal necropolis shelters can be seen, along with the remains of the founder Abdel Moumen and the spiritual master Ibn Toumert. You then carry on to the pretty town of Ouirgane where you will either stop for a coffee at the Ksar (Berber castle) or visit a Berber family for tea, before descending past Asni to the plains and finishing our journey to Marrakesh.



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

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**Day 9: Group transfer to airport. Fly to London.**

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After breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home. (Meals: B)

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## Our grading system

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Sahara Camel Trek, Morocco is graded as a Moderate walking holiday, as described below.

### Moderate

Holidays in this grade typically involve 5 to 10 days of walking or trekking. They will often venture into more remote country and can cross mountain passes. Altitudes though are still relatively low, going no higher than around 4,300m/14,000ft. Accommodation can include simple hotels, tea houses, lodges and camping.

## 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:

- ✓ An English-speaking Moroccan leader
- ✓ International flights from London (flight inclusive option)
- ✓ Excellent riad accommodation in Marrakesh and Ouled Berhil on twin share, bed and breakfast basis
- ✓ Guided tour in Marrakesh with sightseeing as specified
- ✓ All camping facilities and all meals on trek
- ✓ Twin occupancy in triple tents with sleeping mattresses
- ✓ Camelteers and camp staff to carry out all camp work
- ✓ Costs of all portorage
- ✓ Single, timed, group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ All road transport by private minibus
- ✓ A free high-quality Mountain Kingdoms kit bag
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ The option of joining one of our pre-trip meets 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:

- ✗ Tips
- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Lunch and evening meals in Marrakesh
- ✗ Drinking water for the desert crossing

### 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

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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; it is just an easy walk from here to the main square and souks of Marrakesh. It was formerly a princely residence and was restored five years ago with great care and 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 overlooking the High Atlas Mountains. If this Riad is not available we will use Riad Challa or another riad or hotel of a similar standard.



### **Camp**

On this trek you will wild camp, with your camp and tents set up for you by a team of camelteers. There will be a large mess tent where you can relax, a toilet tent, and for sleeping, triple-size tents which each accommodate two people (single tents are an optional extra). Foam sleeping mattresses are provided in each tent. The camp cooks will rustle up traditional Moroccan fare, eaten in the mess tent or around the campfire.



### **Riad Hida, Ouled Berhil**

A lovely old Kasbah has been converted into this beautiful hotel. The Riad offers an outdoor pool with a furnished terrace, and delightful Moroccan style gardens planted with palm trees, jacaranda, bougainvillea and rose bushes. The en suite rooms have air conditioning and each has a private terrace.

## Meal arrangements

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8 x breakfasts, 6 x lunches, 6 x dinners (including a welcome dinner in Marrakesh)

## Flight arrangements

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### **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

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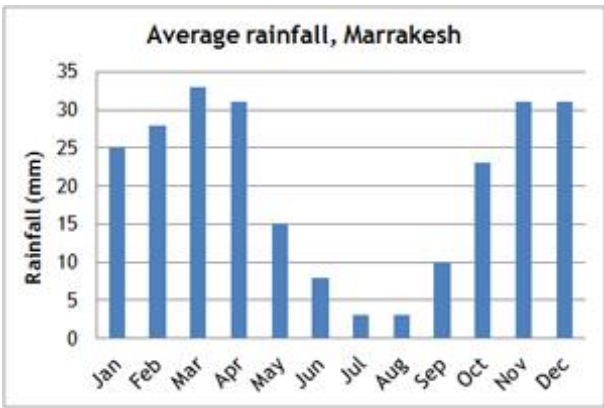
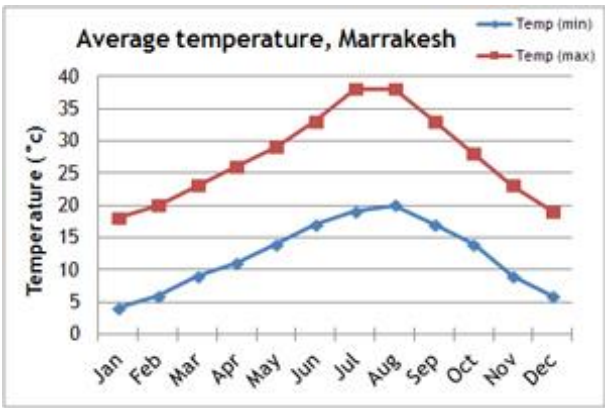
When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

## The nature of adventure travel

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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

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## 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](http://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 Palais de Princesses, the Riad Challa, or one of the other 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?

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- A rare opportunity to experience the incredible atmosphere and tranquillity of the desert with an experienced team to look after the logistics.
- With our unique itinerary you will discover three different sides of Morocco: the bustling city, the soaring mountains of the High Atlas, and the incredible golden sand dunes of the desert.
- We make a thrilling return journey to Marrakesh that takes in some fascinating natural and cultural sights.
- We use quality riad accommodation in Marrakesh and on the return drive to the city. We also include a guided sightseeing tour of Marrakesh.
- We trek in the winter months when the days are warm and sunny but not uncomfortably hot.
- We provide a full service camping experience that includes generous sleeping tents and a large dining tent with table with chairs. The camp cook will produce delicious Moroccan fare which you can enjoy around the campfire.
- Your trek will be led by a knowledgeable, well-trained English-speaking guide supported by an experienced crew who will provide an excellent standard of service. Your camp will be set up for you and your gear will be portered by camels so all you need to carry is a small daypack.
- Our maximum group size is 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects often associated with larger trekking groups.
- We have a number of staff who know Morocco well and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have about travelling there.
- 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.
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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](http://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 we say

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In 1968 I hitched to Morocco with some friends and I regard that trip as my first really big adventure! The culture shock was like a sledgehammer and I fell very much in love with Morocco. I loved the heady atmosphere, the African vibe, the Atlas Mountains and the dreamy Atlantic coastline. The furthest south I got on that trip was the Tizi n'Test pass having hitched a ride with two Canadian guys. This was a high mountain pass from where we could just make out the Sahara Desert. I very distinctly remember thinking, "One day I am going to come back and explore the Sahara". So when in February 2019 on a trek down the coastal path south of Essaouira our Moroccan Guide told me he had been trekking in the Sahara I leapt at the idea. The trek exceeded my already high expectations and I do highly recommend it.

-Steve Berry, MD, Mountain Kingdoms



# Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

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## **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](http://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](http://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.

