

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Toubkal Long Weekend (ATA 2017)



TRIPDURATION
5
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic

Accommodation Grade: Simple

Tour Type: Small Groups

Trek Grade: Challenging

Trip Code: ATA

Trip Highlights - Toubkal Long Weekend

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

Trip Essentials

Accommodation:	2 nights Standard Hotel 1 night Simple Camping 1 night Simple Village House
Included Meals:	4 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners
Start Point:	Join trip: Marrakech
End Point:	Trip ends: Marrakech
Maximum Altitude on Trek (m):	4167
Transport:	Minibus
Countries:	Morocco

Toubkal Long Weekend

On this short trip we focus on climbing to the summit of North Africa's highest peak, Jebel Toubkal (4165m). We travel from the ancient walled city of Marrakech to the High Atlas Mountains, enjoying traditional Berber hospitality as we make our ascent. From the summit we have panoramic views across the entire Atlas chain.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Simple

No-frills accommodation which includes berths on sleeper trains, rooms in village houses, boat cabins, campsites, huts and simple family-run lodges, guesthouses and hotels. Sleeping arrangements are simple and amenities are adequate, sometimes with en suite facilities and occasionally communal.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Trek Grade: Challenging

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

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

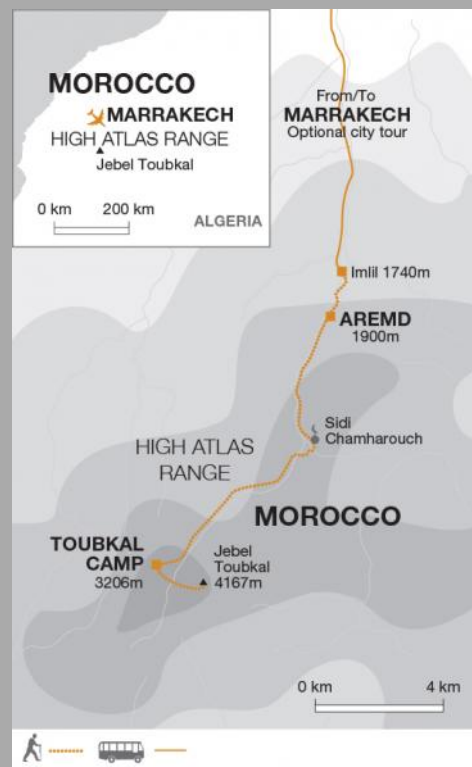
A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Marrakech

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

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 




 **Included Meals:** None

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

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


Overnight: **Simple Camping**
Your own tent available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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

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

Overnight: **Simple Village House**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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

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

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Tour ends Marrakech

Your tour ends today in Marrakech after breakfast. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may be able to spend some additional time wandering in the souks of the 'Red City' or buying the last souvenirs.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

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. A swimming pool is often available, especially in the cities.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 4 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

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.

Morocco

Lunch £: 3.00 - 5.00

Dinner £: 5.00 - 8.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Morocco

Bottle of Beer £: 2.50

Water £: 0.60

Other Sightseeing & 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.

Optional Excursions

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

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

Tipping - Local Crew

Local Crew: Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow approx. £12 for tipping of crew and local guides used.

In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Foreign Exchange

Morocco

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.

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.

Joining your Trip

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 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 on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

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

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

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

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

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.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

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

EXPLORE!

The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

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 follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

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.

Visa Information

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

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com 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.

Vaccinations & Protection

Morocco

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.

Preparing for your Trip

DAILY DISTANCES

Day 2	11km	5hrs
Day 3	13.5km	10.5hrs
Day 4	1.5km	45mins

Maximum Altitude on Trek (m)

4167

Trekking Details

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



Altitude Description

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.

Walking Boots

Well broken in and stout walking boots with good ankle support are essential.

Climate

Morocco

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.

Clothing

In the highlands conditions are generally dry and sunny during the day but bring warm clothing such as a warm fleece, thermal underwear, warm hat and gloves for cooler nights in the mountains when temps drop dramatically. You will also need to bring waterproofs in case the weather changes, particularly at the start and end of the season. Morocco is a Muslim country and it is important to dress with respect for local customs. People may be offended by shorts or revealing dresses, which can attract unwelcome attention. We advise that in general both men and women should cover shoulders, upper arms and knees. Transparent, 'plunging' necklines and tightfitting clothes should be avoided. Women should also cover their heads when entering a sanctuary, though in general, mosques are forbidden to non-Muslims. For those clients on a cycling holiday please bear this information in mind for times that you are not on the bikes. While cycling it is no problem for both men and women to wear your regular cycling gear, tight fitting or not.

Equipment

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

Footwear

Trainers or shoes are useful for relaxing of an evening.

Luggage: On Tour

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

Luggage allowance on trip: 15Kg

General Information

Country details

Morocco

Population: 32,000,000

Size of Country: 446,550 sq km

Major Language: Arabic, Berber, French.

Religion: Islam

Electric Supply & Plugs

Morocco

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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