



TRIP DOSSIER

MOROCCO



'Jebel Sahro'

£550 per person (Land Only)

£575 per person (December land only)

Single supplement: £45

Group Departure Dates:

Friday 1st February 2008

Friday 7th November 2008

Friday 19th December 2008

Friday 20th February 2009

Daily Departures October - March (min 2 people)

Tour Grade: B

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Introduction

This tour is offered as a winter alternative to the High Atlas tours, in the lower and more easterly mountain range of the Jebel Sahro, right on the very fringe of the Sahara desert. The High Atlas is covered in deep snow in the winter, making trekking impossible. The Jebel Sahro, however, receives far less precipitation, and rarely sees snowfall. It provides a delightfully contrasting walking area that becomes oven hot in the summer months. Here you walk past stunning wind eroded rock sculptures, green oases and gently trickling streams which enhance the beauty of the semi-desert landscape. Sparsely populated by the gentle Ait Atta Berbers and infrequently visited, this area provides some very pleasant walking for those that thrive on peace and tranquillity, along mostly easy angled terrain with the optional ascents of a couple of peaks.

About the Country

History Morocco gained its independence in 1956 having been formerly divided between French and Spanish colonies. Spain retained claims over some areas however, most of which were returned to Morocco over the following decade. Morocco's first Head of State was Sultan Mohammed V, who changed his title to King, and was succeeded in 1961, after his death, by his son, Hussein II. In July 1999 Hassan II passed away unexpectedly, to the great disappointment of all the Moroccan people. His son, Mohammed VI has now succeeded his father. It is here in the Jebel Sahro that, in 1933, the hardy Ait Atta Berbers made their last stand against the invading French troops on the mountain of Bou Gaffer, a scene often vividly re-enacted by our Berber guides when we visit the site.

Geography Morocco is situated on the western tip of North Africa, the north coast being on the Mediterranean and the west coast on the Atlantic. It lies very close to Europe, just a short ferry ride across the Strait of Gibraltar. The Atlas Mountain range forms the backbone of the country, from the fertile plains and sandy beaches on the Atlantic coast almost up to the Mediterranean in the north. To the west of the Atlas are fertile well-watered plains running down to the coast, whereas to the east a barren, rocky landscape merges into the true Sahara desert. With the coast, the mountains and the desert in such close proximity, the country enjoys a wide variety of topography. The Jebel Sahro is separate range to the south of the High Atlas, about 120 km long, fringing the Sahara desert.

Climate In general Morocco experiences hot, dry summers and mild winters. In Marrakech you can expect pleasantly warm daytime temperatures in December and March, but may well need sweaters on in the evening. You have to cross the High Atlas by road to get to our trekking area, and it is fairly common for there to be bad weather on the drive. Once on the eastern side of the High Atlas rain is infrequent and expect fine sunny weather during the trek, although you do need to be prepared for bad weather. The daytime temperatures will be pleasant when sunny, but it can drop **well below freezing**, especially in December and at the higher camps at night.

Language The official language of Morocco is Moroccan Arabic. There are also three separate Berber languages, one of which - Tashalhait - is the traditional language of High Atlas and Sous Valley Berbers. French is widely spoken, but little English.

The area we visit Along with Fes and Meknes, Marrakech is one of the most fascinating cities in Morocco. The walled old city (the Medina) is crammed full of narrow streets, markets (souks), palaces and museums where only with a guide can one find the areas one is looking for. Outside the walls the 'new city' (Gueliz) offers the local residents and the tourists the full range of modern facilities - even a Pizza Hut! Our program allows enough time to visit the old (and most interesting) part of town without spending too long there. Just 50 km to the south of Marrakech the High Atlas Mountains rise up out of the plains to an altitude of 4165 metres at the summit of Mount Toubkal. Seen as a clear, snowclad backdrop to the city in the winter months the mountains appear incredibly close. To reach the Jebel Sahro there is a full day's drive over the High Atlas via the Tizi n Tichka pass (2260 m) and the sub Saharan city of Ouazarzate. Beyond Ouazarzate you follow the scenic Draa River and turn northeast to the small market town of N'Kob on the southern side of the mountains, from where the walking starts. You follow tracks and trails through the mountains, sometimes down in the 'waddy' beds and at other times crossing the plateau where the semi-nomadic Ait Atta graze their flocks. The trek ends at Tagdilt on the northern side of the mountains, from where you take transport back to Marrakech.

A Typical Day on Trek

Routine On this trek the cooking and camp chores are handled by our local Berber staff, although they will no doubt be grateful for any assistance you can offer them! Each day you rise at first light and tuck into a breakfast of cereal or porridge, fruit and bread and jam. After packing up, you set off trekking, leaving our muleteers to load their mules. You will usually be on the move at about 7.30, though much depends on what must be done around camp.

The group tends to walk slowly, spending time enjoying the birds, flowers, butterflies and mountain views, and take lunch around midday. (If the pace is not right for you then please discuss it with your guide, as they are very adaptable and want to please). Sometimes you will carry our own picnic lunch to allow detours but usually the mules carry it. Lunch is a leisurely affair (2 hours or so!) and is often the best time to wash yourself and your clothes. After lunch there is usually a shorter afternoon's walk before making camp, leaving plenty of time each evening for relaxation. Tents are used in the Jebel Sahro, but as the terrain can be extremely rocky, don't always expect a perfect pitch. After our evening meal you will find that you are usually asleep by nine or ten o'clock, depending on the quality of the Berber entertainment! Our muleteers are a most happy bunch, and will often sing and dance (though never drink!) until late into the night.

Trekking conditions Our departures are scheduled outside of the hottest season and you can expect the walking to be pleasant except at the start of the trek at lower altitude, when it can be a bit oppressive. At the higher altitudes you can expect to feel quite cold in the evenings and **night time temperatures will often drop below zero, especially in December.** Mornings are usually clear, and this usually lasts throughout the day, but storms may build up during the afternoons. It will be dry and stony underfoot, except after a storm.

Average monthly temperatures in Marrakech.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Max °C	18	20	22	25	28	33	38	37	33	27	23	19
Min °C	5	8	9	11	14	17	21	20	19	15	10	8
Rainfall (mm)	29	30	31	33	20	8	2	2	10	17	27	33

Expect cooler temperatures in the mountains, usually 3°C drop per thousand ft. In 2004/2005 many clients mentioned that it was extremely cold, especially at night, with **estimated** temperatures being around minus 5 to minus 8 °C. It may be that this was an exceptionally cold winter and as conditions do vary year to year it may not reach such low temperatures in the future!

Trek staff The trek will be guided by a qualified local guide who will speak good French and some English. There will be an experienced cook to provide all the meals. Mules will carry all baggage and equipment with each mule being accompanied by a muleteer. The muleteers will also help with the food preparation, bread making, washing up and the erecting and taking down of tents. If the numbers in the group are large enough, a European leader will accompany the group.

What you need to provide Your personal equipment as detailed in the clothing and equipment list later in this Trip Dossier. A sleeping bag **WILL** be required for this trip. Please bring some old clothes that you can leave as a gift for the local staff at the end of the trek if possible.

Ecological considerations *We believe that we are one of the most ecologically aware tour operators in Morocco. We ask for your full consideration and co-operation concerning all ecological matters, especially in the disposal of rubbish. We ask that you ensure that all your rubbish is either burned, buried (or fed to the mules or goats!) if biodegradable, or carried in your kitbag to a suitable disposal point. If you have any suggestions for improvements, please let our local staff know and inform us at Walks Worldwide on your return. It is with the tourists, the locals and the tour operators' co-operation that we can ensure that our tours are as eco-friendly as possible.*

Cultural considerations *As Morocco is a Muslim country we do ask all participants to take this into consideration, especially in the way they dress in the cities and villages. It is expected that women will cover legs and shoulders, although, as Morocco becomes more westernised, even the local people are becoming more relaxed about this. On trek shorts are accepted for walking, but both men and women should wear trousers or a long skirt when staying in the villages. Please do not simply look at other tourists and feel that what they wear is correct – you will never know what the local people think of them. To gain respect from the Moroccan people you should show that you are trying to respect their culture. If in doubt at any time, please consult your tour leader.*

Itinerary

Please be aware that although we will do our best to adhere to this itinerary, occasionally events out of our control may prevent us from following the exact schedule. Please be assured that the clients' best interests will be foremost in any changes that may occur. A degree of flexibility is essential in travelling on such holidays!

Your accommodation and meals included are indicated in *bold italic* at the end of each day.

Day 1. Fly to Marrakech. You will be collected from the airport and it is just a five-minute ride in a private vehicle to your hotel, situated next to the main square (Djemma El Fna) in the old part of Marrakech. *Hotel Foucauld, Marrakech. D*

Day 2. You make an early start today for the seven-hour drive over the Tizi n Tichka by private vehicle to the start point of your trek at N'Kob. It is a very interesting drive as the scenery continually changes, and there will be many opportunities for stops. We recommend that you do not buy any souvenirs at this stage, as they will have to be carried for the whole trek! Also, you will be returning along much of the same route after the trek. *Village house in N'Kob, BD*

Day 3. Your first morning's walk from N'Kob takes you across the flat, stony washout plains leading up towards the mountains. After lunch you enter the foothills, passing small villages and isolated homesteads where the owners irrigate and cultivate small patches of land. *Camp near Tiguiza. BLD*

Day 4. Following mainly wide-open valleys with some gentle ascents, you pass the first of many spectacular rock pinnacles that are common in this region. As you get deeper into the mountains water is more plentiful and you see more cultivation around the villages. *Camp near Tagra. BLD*

Day 5. A short ascent takes you out of the Tagra valley and up onto a fine plateau region where you will find some of the semi-nomadic Ait Atta Berbers in their large tents with their flocks of sheep and goats. You pass Tadout n Tablah, a forest of wind eroded pinnacles, and the impressive free standing rock tower of Bab N'Ali. After a short break at a roadhead 'gite' you head north to reach the small village of Igli, situated right in the heart of the Jebel Sahro. *Camp near Igli. BLD*

Day 6. A little way north of Igli is the rock formations of Tassigdel (the camel's humps) which you will pass by today. Beyond here you ascend to the Tizi n Ouarg pass. The energetic amongst you may like to ascend to the top of Kouaouch (2592 metres), from where there are fine views to the Atlas Mountains to the north. *Camp below Tizi n Ouarg. BLD*

Day 7. Continuing north, there are a variety of options today, but the most direct trail goes over the beautiful Isk n' Alla (2569 metres), before descending the northern flanks of the Sahro and leading on to the small settlement of Tagdilt, your final destination on the trek. *Camp or gite d'etape, Tagdilt. BLD*

Day 8. After an early breakfast you say farewell to the muleteers and transfer by minibus to Marrakech. This journey will take about 7 hours and involves returning to Ouazarzate, before crossing the High Atlas Mountains via the Tizi n Tichka pass – a very spectacular road on the western side of the mountains. Lunch will be taken en route, but we hope to get you back to Marrakech in the early afternoon. *Hotel Foucauld, Marrakech. BD*

Day 9. Full day free in Marrakech. *Hotel Foucauld, Marrakech. BD*

Day 10. Return to London, leaving Marrakech in the afternoon. *B*

Practical Information

Passports and Visas All nationalities require a valid passport with an expiry date at least 6 months after the date of your return to London. Most nationalities (including British) do not require a visa; if in doubt, please check with us.

Accommodation In Marrakech we use a relatively modest hotel because it offers better settings and perspectives on local life than the isolated first class hotels. Accommodation is on a share twin basis, though single rooms are usually available at the single room supplement price listed in the brochure. Please let us know as soon as possible if you would like a single room, and make your payment before departure or, preferably, on booking. All the rooms have private facilities. Upgrades are available – please refer to our brochure.

On trek you will sleep in two person tents, except in N'Kob where you sleep and eat in a village house and in Tagdilt where you may use simple local accommodation if it is available.

Food Moroccan food is excellent. First class fresh produce, with the subtle addition of herbs and spices, is used to produce innumerable tagines (stews), meschoui (roast lamb), couscous and pastilla (pigeon pie). The fresh fruit is delicious, and so are Moroccan cakes and pastries. You will be able to sample all these in Marrakech, and there will usually be plenty of European - mainly French - food available too.

In the mountains large quantities of fresh fruit and vegetables are used, supplemented by imported tinned and dried meat, cereals, jams and spreads, and desserts.

We provide tea, coffee, mint tea and hot chocolate, at the beginning and end of each day, but not boiled water, as only a limited amount of bottled gas can be carried. Sterilising tablets or Lugol's iodine solution are always useful however, and we advise you to bring them, as an insurance policy, for use in water in cities and on trek. Bottled mineral water is readily available in the cities and towns, but will not be available in the mountains all the time. Soft fizzy drinks however seem to appear (at a price) in the most unlikely of places. As Morocco is a Muslim country you will only be able to buy beer in Marrakech.

We cannot cater specifically for non-omnivores, but vegetarians will usually find that there is generally little difficulty as long as they are prepared to be reasonably flexible. However they may have to make polite, subtle excuses if they are guests in a village house as it is rude to refuse food that is offered, but it is usually quite easy to 'pretend' to eat with the group.

Local transport All transfers will be made using private vehicles.

Baggage Please make sure that your baggage is clearly marked with your name, inside as well as outside, in case the labels get detached. We limit you to 15 kilos whilst on trek, and recommend you to pack your clothes in plastic bags to ensure they remain dry. We would prefer you use your kitbags rather than large rucksacks on trek, and we will be sending you a complimentary *Walks Worldwide* kitbag about two weeks prior to the tour, which is ideal for the purpose. Your entire trek luggage (including your sleeping bag) should, if at all possible, be packed into one kitbag. Extra baggage may be left in your hotel while you are trekking.

Vaccinations and medical precautions There are no statutory requirements in Morocco, unless you are arriving from an area infected with cholera or yellow fever. We recommend however, that you be protected against TB, typhoid, polio, tetanus and, particularly, hepatitis A. Malaria in Morocco is almost non-existent, but you may wish to take malarial tablets. Your doctor should advise you on this and about vaccinations, and you should therefore make an appointment to see him/her well in advance of your holiday if possible.

Customs You can take into Morocco 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 400 grams of tobacco plus a 'reasonable amount' of alcohol for personal use (one bottle is the norm). Remember that there is virtually no alcohol available outside of Marrakech so a wee tot in the evening at camp is quite popular. The Berbers are quite strict Muslims and despite not drinking alcohol themselves, they will not be offended if it is drunk by westerners in the camps. It is however rather impolite to drink openly when in the villages.

Currency The Moroccan unit of currency is the Dirham (DH). At the time of writing £1 = 16 DH. No Moroccan currency may be imported or exported. There is no limit on the amount of foreign currency that may be imported provided it is declared on arrival. When changing your money, ensure that you keep your receipt, which will enable you to exchange up to half the amount of Dirhams you have received back into foreign currency when you leave the country.

Electricity 240 volts A.C.

Time Moroccan time is GMT all year round.

Contact details It is not our policy to provide addresses and telephone numbers of every location that you will be staying at on this tour as, due to frequent changes in contact details, it is very difficult to provide an accurate list for all our tours. Your Final Joining Instructions, which you will receive 2 weeks prior to departure, will show any local contact details that are required for your tour. However we would be glad to provide you more details if you have a specific reason.

Mobile phones do work in Morocco. If you have not used your mobile outside the UK before you will have to contact your operator to enable international calls. *Please ensure your phone is set for roaming if you are taking a mobile.* Please note that it is expensive to phone both to and out of a mobile when abroad. We do not however encourage mobile phone use whilst walking on any of our trips – out of courtesy to other clients please use you

mobile phone discretely. If you do need to get in touch, or if anyone needs to get in touch with you, please contact the Walks Worldwide office (01524 242000) during office hours.

Tipping There is no compulsory tipping on any of our treks. However tipping in bars and restaurants is usual in Morocco, and at the end of most meals you should expect to throw in 5 or 6 Dirhams (about 10%) to provide a tip for the waiter. Our Berber staff and muleteers have come to 'expect' a tip at the end of the trek, which usually comprises of some old clothing as well as some cash. It should be remembered, however, that over-generosity can lead to jealousies in poor countries. Our tour leader will advise you on a suitable amount, but please remember that all tips should be a way for individuals to thank staff for good service.

As a guideline each trekker should allow £2 - £3 per day to cover the tips for the Moroccan trekking team.

Things to buy Carpets, woollen and leather goods, pottery, jewellery, woodwork, copper and silverware. Bargaining is essential!

Maps A good map of the Jebel Sahro has recently been published by Naturwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft Bayereuth e.V (ISBN 3-9809181-3-0). We recommend that you try either: The Map Shop, 15 High Street, Upton-on-Severn, Worcs WR8 0HJ (Tel: 01684 593146) or Stanfords at 12-14 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LP (Tel: 0171 836 1321).

Included in the price

- All transfers.
- Accommodation.
- Meals as shown in the itinerary
- Services of local guides, cooks and muleteers.
- Walks Worldwide* kitbag.

Extra expenses

- Flights and airport taxes (included on the Christmas departure)
- Personal spending and souvenirs.
- Insurance.
- Drinks.

Flights As there has recently been a dramatic increase in flights from UK regional airports to Marrakech , especially with budget airlines (Easyjet, Ryan Air, Thomsonfly, Atlas Blue), we are offering this tour at a 'land only price', giving you the choice to arrange flights that suit you best. Alternatively we will gladly book these flights for you (payable in full at the time of booking and non-refundable) or quote you a price for flights with the scheduled airlines of either Royal Air Maroc or British Airways. However, for the Christmas departure, we have pre-booked flights in advance with a scheduled airline, and the price for this date is shown inclusive of flights.

It is often possible and preferable to arrive a day or so early, or depart a day or so late, spending an extra night or two in the fascinating city of Marrakech (our most popular destination). We will gladly reserve you extra nights in the Hotel Foucauld, or any other hotel shown in our Marrakech upgrades section in our brochure.

Local joining details for those not flying from London Those joining locally should arrive at the *Hotel de Foucauld, Ave. El Mouahidine, Marrakech*, no later than the evening of Day 1. You should mention that you are with Walks Worldwide, and take a room reserved for you on a twin share basis, unless you have already requested a single room. Your leader and the rest of the group will be arriving later in the evening. From the airport or elsewhere you will be able to take a taxi to your hotel. This may involve some haggling, but should only cost you about 50 Dirhams! If you wish to arrive a few days early, we can arrange additional accommodation for you provided you notify us *at least* four weeks in advance; you should pay for this accommodation when you pay the balance of your holiday.

What our clients have said!

'I just wanted to say how pleased we were with the wonderful holiday we have just had in Morocco. We still haven't quite come back down to earth – definitely one of the best holidays we have had. We booked fairly much at the last minute as the group trek we had booked on with another company was cancelled. Walks Worldwide were excellent in sorting out a similar trek that fitted in with the dates we had available within a few days. My

husband was a lot more enthusiastic about a trek for just the two of us than a large group and I too feel we gained a great deal from going on our own with our guide and muleteer. This was our first ever trekking holiday, so we didn't really know what to expect, but it surpassed expectations. The organisation was excellent and all connections and meetings went without a hitch...Many thanks for organising a wonderful holiday. We are sorting the photos and planning when we can next go back to Morocco. **C. & B.B. Jan 2005.**

'It was, all in all, an amazing experience. The walking was wonderful and I'm so glad I had this opportunity.' **B.C. Dec 2004.**

'Everyone looked after us really well and made us comfortable and attended to our needs and requests. All the staff/trip workers we met were fantastic. The mules were tireless and mostly good tempered.' **J.D. Dec 2004.**

'This was a terrific holiday which I enjoyed very much.' **W.P. Dec 2004.**

'Mike – great trip! Wonderful staff, everything was seamless. Many thanks!' **L.M. Dec 2004.**

'Excellent overall and good service from Norman the leader and the local crew.' **J.C. Dec 2004.**

'Morocco is a most fabulous country and I would return tomorrow'. **S.K. Dec 2004.**

'All the camp crew were outstanding and could not have done more for us.' **D. & A. Grainger Dec 2004.**

'Thanks very much for all your help in organising and also for sending on the maps of our well-trodden path. Thanks to David for that, and for being a great guide. I'm sure I will be travelling with you again. Travelling with a fourteen year old can create its' own difficulties, socially more than otherwise. Mohammed was excellent with my son, once they clicked the ability to have fun together impressed me. Mohammed was very mature in dealing with a group of varying talents! What a wonderful, wonderful holiday and thanks to all of you in the office for all your efficiency and unseen planning which helped make it so. From the moment that Larsen collected us at the airport to Omar leaving us back this was a wonderful experience.' **M.M. Feb 2002.**

'All the crew were excellent – friendly, helpful etc...everything was excellent. Thank you.' **P.P. Nov 2002.**

'I like the fact that this is a small company, dedicated to walking.' **F.H. Dec 2002.**

Clothing and Equipment Lists.

At least one set of light casual clothes will be useful for use in Marrakech on this holiday. On trek you must not worry about how you look: comfort and protection against bad weather and the sun are of prime importance. Because mountain weather is so very variable, we recommend a number of thin layers rather than a few thick ones. Take old, well-worn clothes rather than rushing out to buy new ones, since they will probably get rough treatment on trek, and they can be left as gifts for the muleteers at the end of the trek. The following list of clothing and equipment is intended to be fairly comprehensive, and experienced trekkers may well take a good deal less luggage than we recommend.

CLOTHING	NUMBER	Check	EQUIPMENT	Check
Walking boots	1 pair definitely needed		Sleeping bag (3/4 seasons)	
Training shoes	1 pair - all purpose wear		Sheet sleeping bag	
Casual shoes/sandals	Optional - for hotel wear		Sleeping mat – <i>optional</i> - foam mattresses will be provided	
Socks	Personal choice		Torch	
Underwear	Personal choice		Binoculars (optional)	
"T" shirts	3+		Camera, film and accessories	
Long trousers	2+		A variety of plastic bags (the kitbags are not waterproof)	
Short trousers	1/2		Sunglasses	
Sunhat	1		Daypack/small rucksack	
Thick fleece	1		Washing and shaving kits	
Waterproof jacket	1		Large water bottle	
Waterproof trousers	1		Water purifying tablets (iodine based are best)	
Padded/fleece trousers	1		Reading material	
Track suit	Optional		First aid kit	
Thermal underwear	Definitely recommended		Notebook/diary	
Gloves	1 pair		Towel	
Warm hat and scarf	1		Money belt/pouch	
Down jacket	Recommended		Walking pole(s) - Optional	
Swimming costume	Optional			

The following items are most useful, and *those in bold type are essential*.

ITEM	Check	ITEM	Check
Moisturising cream and lipsalve		Small sewing kit (not in hand luggage)	
Safety pins (not in hand luggage)		Insect repellent	
Penknife (not in hand luggage)		Impact adhesive	
Light washing line and pegs		Universal travelling adaptor	
Spare bulbs and batteries		Small mirror	
Nail clippers (not in hand luggage)		Scissors (not in hand luggage)	
Cold water detergent		Earplugs (against dogs and snorers!)	
Loo paper for the trip		Padlock(s) for your kitbags	
Spare glasses or contact lenses		Boot wax	
Spare boot laces		Matches or lighter	
Crayons/paper/socks/hats for the local kids		Sweets for energy/trail snacks	
Baby wipes/'dry' handwash/sanitiser		Sun cream	
PASSPORT (with VISA if required)		MONEY / TC'S	
AIR TICKET		Folding washing bowl (Ortlieb make one)	