

Winter ascents of North Africa's highest peak
Jebel Toubkal 4167m

ToubkalMountainGuides.com



TOUBKAL
Mountain Guides

Our Experience Your Expedition

Welcome to ToubkalMountainGuides.com - the specialists in winter mountaineering, climbing, trekking and scrambling trips in the Toubkal area of the Moroccan High Atlas Mountains.

We are a small independent **professional mountain guiding company** of Irish, English, French, Swiss & American professional guides - **most of whom live year-round in Morocco**. We have years of combined experience in leading small groups & individuals to the highest peak in North Africa as well as to some of the most remote and unspoilt areas all over the Moroccan High Atlas.

We hope you'll find all the information you want before attempting Mount Toubkal in winter conditions in this pdf. Some people like to download an entire document and read it at their leisure whilst others prefer to dive right in and get to the information they want immediately and then maybe go back to reading from the start! So to help you all whatever your way of reading stuff like this is, here's the index with the relevant page numbers.

P3 ABOUT US	Who we are, our trip ethos and all the usual stuff you'd normally ask
P4 CONTACT US	Ways to actually get hold of us
P4 ON-LINE PAGES	External links including our famous BLOG
P5 MAPS	Everything from jpegs to waterproof ones
P6 ITINERARIES/GRADES	The HOW page - how long, how fit, how experienced, how many.....
P7 PRICES & DATES	The nitty gritty
P8 WHAT THEY'VE SAID	Previous clients that is
P9 SUGGESTED GEAR LIST	What you'll need to have and what you can get away without
P12 MISC INFORMATION	Everything from what do you eat for breakfast to questions on altitude issues
P13 BOOKING A TRIP	You've been finally persuaded and now just want to get on with it

About Us

Who are Toubkal Mountain Guides?

It's a trading name of Wilderplaces Adventure Tours NI Ltd - a company registered in Northern Ireland. Our registered company no. is NIO49726 & **Des Clark IML** is one of the founding directors (along with Robbie Fenlon UIAGM).



TMG was set up to focus exclusively on trips & ascents in the Toubkal area, whereas our other main Moroccan website NomadicMorocco.Com focuses on all the other areas of the High Atlas.

ToubkalMountainGuides.com is headed up by **Des Clark**, an Irishman with 20+ years of mountain-top experience in Scottish winters (before he got sense!), the Alps, Pyrenees, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina including Aconcagua summit twice, Chile and Iceland. A qualified International Mountain Leader (BAIML.org) he resides in the (mostly!) sunny climes of southern Morocco with his wife and their 3 children.



Who will be our guide?

Most of us live in Morocco guiding for TMG and also doing our own thing - whether it's new routes, writing guidebooks (or trying to!), 4x4 desert trips, helping out some villages with NGO type projects, running small separate companies - whatever! We will of course tell you before your trip starts who your guide will be. **Whoever it is, our trip quality is consistently high.**

Are you insured?

Absolutely! Wilderplaces Adventure Tours (NI) Ltd (and all its trading names) is insured in the UK with Royal Sun Alliance for professional indemnity and public liability. *In addition* we require all our clients to arrange their own medical / travel / repatriation insurance in advance of the trip.

How are clients legally protected?

Although we operate in Morocco, the contract between us and our clients is in the name of our registered NI/UK company, Wilderplaces Adventure Tours (NI) Ltd. Running any internet focused company requires trust on both the clients and company's part. You can totally rely on our honesty. **Many of our clients are repeats and / or by word of mouth.**

Do you have any sort of "mission statement"?

Yes - we strive to offer high quality Toubkal ascents (particularly winter/technical) and give our clients something different from the bigger, international travel companies. Sensitivity to the local environment and Berber culture is of the utmost importance to all of us. We have a relatively small client base - the result of this is that we get to know most of them (and maybe you!) on an individual level and so can offer a **highly personalised** service before, during and after a trip.

We try and avoid paperwork as much as possible (a common aspiration we're sure!), and so we are entirely "internet based" in terms of marketing, trip information and so on.

We aim to provide a truly personalised service from the moment you contact us. Your safety is of paramount concern to us. We work on a very low client: guide ratio that most other companies offering Toubkal would simply find uneconomical - e.g. our winter trips have a **max ratio 6:1 and sometimes even lower** depending on the route in question. In addition small groups work better together, are more personal and provide the flexibility (particularly in winter) that ascents of a 4000m peak often require.

There are a few other companies offering Toubkal (winter) trips. Why book with you?

- **We are some of the most knowledgeable, experienced and qualified western guides (living) in Morocco** and try harder than almost anyone to make sure you have the best (winter) Toubkal experience. *Having a company with guides that are based here in-country is so much more beneficial to clients we believe, than travelling with a company that may outsource all your summit aspirations out to others.*
- We will be **totally honest** with you.
- We try to run the **most imaginative itineraries** and definitely do not "follow the crowd"! No other company offers such a wide variety of winter itineraries that we do - e.g. we are the only company (that we know of!), that offers commercial winter trips accessing Toubkal from the south side (our Ifni itinerary)
- We prefer to run **small group trips** that definitely don't make as much money as some large groups that we see around with other companies! Our normal maximum group size (6) is often other companies minimum number! Small groups to us are safer, more flexible and much more enjoyable.
- **We enjoy what we're doing!**

Contact Us

Yes – you got it! We're often out of the office and away from reliable communications. That said we will always respond to you as soon as we can and when you email us or leave a voicemail we will tell you at that stage our current response timescale (usually it's either on the day reply or up to 4 days away).



There are 3 ways to get hold of us:

i) using this form-mail facility on our website

(<http://www.toubkalmountainguides.com/contactus.htm>) . This is the only way to email us initially as we have found that by putting our actual email address on web-pages we are inviting hordes of spam!

ii) Skype: [nomadicmorocco](https://www.skype.com/en/contacts/nomad/morocco)

iii) phoning us on our Thuraya satellite phone [00 88 216 52081800](tel:008821652081800)

Only do this please if the matter is very urgent, you have already emailed us and have heard nothing from us within our stated response time.

Please - we are not in the business of giving free advice! Sometimes we *do* respond to emails looking for advice but other times not. If we don't reply to an email which is in effect asking us to organise your own holiday for free, forgive us!

On-Line pages

OUR BLOG, which can be viewed separately at <http://toubkalmountainguides.blogspot.com> contains weather reports; news; updates & articles. Not quite all you'll ever need but close!

Some photos from past seasons

- <http://www.pixagogo.com/6632194102> (08/09)
- <http://www.pixagogo.com/2770874921> (07/08)
- <http://www.pixagogo.com/8966464611> (06/07)
- <http://www.pixagogo.com/8857644364> (Oct 06)

Links to other sites relevant to Toubkal

- <http://www.imlil.org> (a good friend & TMG guide is the webmaster of all things pertaining to Imlil)
- <http://www.refugetoubkal.com> (Refuge Mouflon Toubkal)

Itineraries / Grades

These "off the peg" itineraries are based on us meeting you in central Marrakech early morning on the first day & aiming to get you back there for mid-afternoon on the last day. [See next page for an explanation of Technical & Fitness Grades.](#)

	IMLIL 4 days T:1 F:A	LEPINEY 5 days T:3 F:B	IFNI 5 days T:2 F:B
	<i>This itinerary on the northern side offers an ascent of the 2nd and 3rd highest peaks in the High Atlas. All things going well therefore, you will have topped out on 1, 2 & 3 in North Africa by the end of the trip!.</i>	<i>This itinerary on the northern side ensures we do not cover the same ground twice at all during our entire trip and we also avoid the main "highway" from Imlil up to Toubkal except for returning at the very end.</i>	<i>This itinerary is unique for commercial guiding companies. We drive around the eastern side of the Toubkal massif before starting our ascent from the beautiful Lac d'Ifni on the south-east slopes of Toubkal itself. Climbing over the high Ouanoums pass brings us to the Toubkal refuge. After Toubkal we descend down to Imlil on the north side. A true mountain traverse!</i>
Day 1	Meet in Marrakech early morning, transfer to the small Berber village of Imlil (about 1.5 hours drive south and 1740m altitude) which is the end of the road. Mid morning coffee before beginning our trek up to the Mouflon (Toubkal) refuge , around 3165m. This will take around 6 hours including a lunch stop at the shrine of Sidi Chamarouch where the snow-line generally starts. After arriving at the hut, get settled in and keep warm! Enjoy some great views as the sun sets...	Meet in Marrakech early morning, transfer to the small Berber village of Imlil (about 1.5 hours drive south and 1740m altitude) which is the end of the road. Mid morning coffee before beginning our trek westwards to the traditional Berber village of Tizi Ousse , around 1900m. This will take around 5 hours including a lunch stop at Tizi Mzik where we will enjoy some stunning views. After arriving at our comfortable gite in Tizi Ousse, we will savour some mint tea as the sun sets...	Meet in Marrakech early morning and using our 4x4's, drive over the dramatic Tizi n-Tichka road pass to the east of Toubkal massif. Lunch at the pass offers some great views. Afterwards we take a dirt road to the Berber village of Amsouart situated to the south-east of Toubkal at 1740m. Stay in traditional Berber village house.
Day 2	The 2nd & 3rd highest peaks (Ouanoukrim twins) in the High Atlas lie at the head of the Mizane valley and provide a great day out with excellent views of Toubkal. Today we will aim for these summits arriving back to the refuge in time for lunch. Whilst we recommend this day as a good way to acclimatise as the peaks are at just over 4000m's, you can also opt to sit in the sun for the day if you are tired from yesterday's efforts in reaching in hut.	After breakfast, trek up to the simple CAF Lepiney (Tazaghart) refuge at 3000m altitude. This will take around 4-5 hours. Summer grazing settlements (azibs), impressive waterfalls, high peaks and stunning scenery is the order of the day - a great day in the mountains! Furthermore sleeping at 3000ms will help acclimatise us for the next few days efforts.	After breakfast, we trek up to the only lake in the Toubkal region - Lac d'Ifni . It may well be snow or ice covered with the dramatic south face of Toubkal soaring up behind the lake - a great location! Stay overnight in a simple Berber village house at around 2300m altitude.
Day 3	An early start for the summit of Toubkal . Generally we leave the refuge around 07.00 or possibly earlier depending on time of year, weather and conditions. Our route of choice on Toubkal itself , is the north-cwm route (which is by far the less frequented of the main routes starting at the refuges below). <i>However we will only attempt this route if weather, snow conditions and group abilities allow</i> - otherwise we will climb Toubkal by the standard south-cwm route. Whichever route we do climb, you can be assured of a great day out! Expect a 7-8 hour energetic day before we get back to the refuge for late lunch. Then sit in the sun and re-live the day....	Today we move on from the Lepiney refuge to the Mouflon (Toubkal) refuge situated at the base of the highest mountain in North Africa. To-day's route brings us over a pass of about 3500m with some great views of the Toubkal massif. (5 hours).	Today, the crux of the trip, we move on to the Mouflon (Toubkal) refuge situated at the base of the highest mountain in North Africa. To-day's route brings us over the watershed of the Atlas mountains - the spectacular Ouanoums pass at over 3650m before dropping down to the inviting refuge some 500m below. Expect an 8 hour day.
Day 4	After breakfast, trek back to Imlil to arrive around mid-day. A last coffee there before our transfer back to Marrakech. Aim to arrive Marrakech mid afternoon.	An early start for the summit of Toubkal . Generally we leave the refuge around 07.00 or possibly earlier depending on time of year, weather and conditions. Our route of choice on Toubkal itself , is the north-cwm route (which is by far the less frequented of the main routes starting at the refuges below). <i>However we will only attempt this route if weather, snow conditions and group abilities allow</i> - otherwise we will climb Toubkal by the standard south-cwm route. Whichever route we do climb, you can be assured of a great day out! Expect a 7-8 hour energetic day before we get back to the refuge for late lunch. Then sit in the sun and re-live the day....	An early start for the summit of Toubkal . Generally we leave the refuge around 07.00 or possibly earlier depending on time of year, weather and conditions. Our route of choice on Toubkal itself , is the north-cwm route (which is by far the less frequented of the main routes starting at the refuges below). <i>However we will only attempt this route if weather, snow conditions and group abilities allow</i> - otherwise we will climb Toubkal by the standard south-cwm route. Whichever route we do climb, you can be assured of a great day out! Expect a 7-8 hour energetic day before we get back to the refuge for late lunch. Then sit in the sun and re-live the day....
Day 5		After breakfast, trek back to Imlil to arrive around mid-day. A last coffee there before our transfer back to Marrakech. Aim to arrive Marrakech mid afternoon.	After breakfast, trek down to Imlil to arrive around mid-day. A last coffee there before our transfer back to Marrakech. Aim to arrive Marrakech mid afternoon.

ROUTE GRADES

Please remember that factors such as snow conditions, altitude acclimatisation and weather will *always* play a part in your trip. If in doubt about your abilities etc, then please do contact us (<http://www.toubkalmountainguides.com/contactus.htm>) for advice.

Technical Difficulty:

- 1 Mostly low angle snow (up to 35 degrees) or straightforward scrambling on rocks. Previous winter walking experience is not essential.
- 2 Short, steeper sections of snow up to about 40 degrees. More sustained scrambling with some exposure. Ice axe and crampon experience necessary.
- 3 Short, steep sections of snow up to about 45 degrees. Previous experience of Scottish II/Alpine PD- is preferable.
- 4 Long, steep snow and ice slopes with short steps of very steep ice or low grade rock climbing. Good all-round climbing ability required to Scottish III/Alpine AD.

Fitness:

- A Good basic fitness, as for general hill-walking. Average rucsac weight: 6-8 kg. Porters will carry your overnight / spare kit to / from Imlil to / from Mouflon refuge (1 shared kit bag per 2 people)
- B Good cardio-vascular fitness which for some people requires extra training by hard long walks (e.g. munro-bagging), running, and perhaps some gym work. Ability to carry all your personal gear (12-15kg rucsac) for 3 days out of the overall trip length of 5 days
- C High level of fitness coupled with physical toughness and the ability to carry a backpacking rucsac (15+ kg) over tricky terrain for most of the trip.

Prices / Dates

HERE'S THE DEAL

The 3 "off the peg" itineraries outlined above will run with a minimum of 3 persons for **public trips** (open to anyone) and a minimum of just 2 persons for **private trips** (closed to just you and your party).

Public trips:

If you are looking for a cheaper price and are happy to share your experiences with others you don't know at the outset, then you can either look at our on-line calendar (<http://www.toubkalmountainguides.com/datesprices.htm>) to see if there are any already advertised public trips with availability that interest / suit you or choose your own dates & itinerary and opt to make your trip open for others to join you. In this case we will take your booking and will advertise it as a public trip for others to join (*please note that in this instance we cannot confirm the trip will definitely run until we have a minimum of 3 persons signed up*).

Private trips:

As a private closed group trip, you are free to choose your itinerary & dates and we will confirm that this trip will run once you contact us. Normally we can run private trips pretty much any time except where the dates overlap with other trips or clash with major Moroccan National holidays &/or religious festivals. To see what trips we have running already just go to our on-line calendar at <http://www.toubkalmountainguides.com/datesprices.htm>

(Our maximum group size is 6 unless you are a private group in which case we will extend the size to whatever your group is – but still operate on a 6 clients : 1 guide ratio).

TRIP PRICES PER PERSON* (please also read our notes below if / when comparing our costs to others)

Type of trip	Public trips (max 6 in group)	Private trips for 2 people	Private trips for 3 to 6 people (more than 6 people contact us)
Imlil 4 days	€ 475	€ 700	€ 475
Lepiney 5 days	€ 575	€ 860	€ 575
Ifni 5 days	€ 575	€ 860	€ 575

Prices include pretty much everything once we meet up in Marrakech. For more info, see the last page headed "Booking"

If you're still trying to decide between us and another guiding operator(s) working on Toubkal, here may be some helpful questions to ask:

- Ask if they have Professional Indemnity insurance that you can rely on back home (within the EU).
- Ask about their safety procedures and what happens if....? Does the guide have an up-to-date wilderness first-aid certificate?
- Check that the company has more than one guide who can lead the trip in case of injury, illness etc
- How long has the company been in business? Does the guide have an internationally recognised guiding qualification / experience?
- What are the climber to guide ratios?
- Ask about the route choice? Are you going to be led without question up the standard south col route or do you get a choice / say in opting for the North Col or other ridge routes if weather / conditions permit?



.....not far to go now to the summit of Jebel Toubkal!

What they've said

Some recent feedback...

"I just wanted to thank Des and Yannick for an excellent trip to the Atlas Mountains. The organisation and all the time on the hill was simply brilliant. I am looking forward to coming back as soon as we can - hopefully next time with some snow! I'm writing this on a plane heading for Vinson - I think our trip to the Atlas was a really good training trip for this. Hope the rest of the season goes well - safe climbing!"

MD

"Hi Des and all at TMG, we had a very relaxing few days after our trip in the mountains and really enjoyed all that Morocco has to offer. Thanks so much for a great mountain experience - it will not be forgotten. The trip was excellent from the guiding to the food. We will certainly be recommending this to friends!"

MED

"It was a great tour. All the right decisions were made to get success out of the conditions, and the organisation held together throughout. Many, many thanks."

MR

"Boo hoo! Back in work this morning after a fab week is just hard to imagine. A big thanks to Des for the excellent week and great judgment on all fronts."

MMcC

"I had a great time, thoroughly enjoyed myself and really got a taste for some more mountaineering on the international scene. Helen and Des struck a great balance between providing all the support necessary without over managing anyone - which allowed you to feel a degree of autonomy on the hills that you'd be used to in your own country. I would highly recommend the trip"

AK

"Just a quick note to thank-you once again for organising our Toubkal trip last week. We both thoroughly enjoyed it and we were well impressed with the guiding, as well as with the other arrangements which you had made for us. It will certainly be my pleasure to recommend your company to anyone I know who is thinking of tackling Toubkal"

AR

"We had a great trip and a large part of it was because of your knowledge, patience and passion for the sport and the region. We really felt it and it drove us to push harder and harder"

HS

"We had a great time - and much of it due to your expert & confident advice and leadership"

EJ

"It was then and still remains a mighty experience!"

CC

This comprehensive list doesn't have to be followed to the letter - we know that everyone has their own clothing preferences. Working through this list however means that nothing major will be overlooked. We're very happy to answer any queries or elaborate on anything that you may find unclear - email is best.

CLOTHING

Mornings are cold before the sun has come over the ridge. However once it has risen the reflection off the snow can make it feel warm although there may well be a cooling wind on the more exposed faces and tops. The Toubkal Mouflon mountain refuge has a fire but it doesn't have much effect on the large open seating area and the bedrooms are cold so a good sleeping bag is essential! The Lepiney refuge is small so whilst there is no actual heating, the combination of the daytime sun on the roof and people in the hut can make it feel warmer than it probably is! All this to say that it is best to work on the "multi layering" system rather than one thick layer such as with Buffalo or similar.

[] **Base Layer.** A synthetic wicking layer, with a long sleeved top (with a good neck zip for ventilation). Long-johns (depending on your choice of trousers) possibly.

[] **Fleece Jacket.** Polartec 200-300gm suggested as main warm layer for the hill. Alternatively a couple of mid weight (100-200gm) fleece tops worn together.

[] **Down Jacket.** This is not mandatory but if you have one (or have the budget for one) then bring it. Certainly if you are envisaging staying in the Lepiney hut you will regret not having one. Mountain Equipment Classic Lightline or Rab Neutrino are good choices.

[] **Underwear.** Preferably synthetic as they dry quicker than cotton M&S!

[] **Trousers / Pants.** Fleece or synthetic / nylon or polyester. Avoid cotton or trekking trousers such as Rohan as they absorb moisture easily and thereby have a cooling effect. Powerstretch is good but can be hot once the sun is up. Ron Hill's are ok if combined with a windproof shell. Paramo gear is nice in particularly cold and snowy weather but many feel it is too warm – your choice!

[] **Waterproofs.** It has been know to rain / snow on our trips so do come prepared! There is a huge choice of breathable waterproof tops available - make sure the jacket has a good hood. Waterproof trousers can be of lighter weight than the top - make sure that they have a long / full length zip so you can put them on whilst still wearing boots / crampons.

[] **Headwear.** Warm woolly hat, cap and sunhat with wide brim. Because of the variation in temperatures you will experience you will use them all. Also a Buff or similar neck gaitor / tube is a good idea and it weighs nothing.

[] **Gloves.** A pair of thin liners you can keep on the whole time if you need to. On top of this a pair of Windstopper gloves (North Face / Mtn Equipment). Alternatively gloves that have a removable fleece liner. Mitts are ok but gloves are better. There is a huge choice available so don't skimp. Work on the layering principal rather than one thick pair.

FOOTWEAR

The snowline is generally around the 2350m mark. Below that in the cities and villages trekking sandals or the like will suffice. Approaching the refuges it is easier to wear your boots from the outset as the walking time below the snow will only be a couple of hours at most so there is no need to buy specific "approach shoes". None of the refuges / gites have any hut "slippers" or the like so if you don't want to wear your boots in the refuges (which is allowed!), then bring your own runners or sandals.

[] **Socks.** Loop stitch - e.g. Thorlo are nice. Bridgedale are also good. Bring spares so you are always putting on a dry pair in the mornings.

[] **Trekking Sandals &/or runners / hut "booties".** See above paragraph for explanation.

[] **Boots.** At least a three-quarter length shank for stiffness for crampons. A full-length shank is better as these type of boots are generally warmer and more supportive but are more expensive to buy! There is absolutely no need for plastic boots like the Scarpa Vega. Scarpa Cumbre; Sportiva Nepal and Scarpa Phantom-Lites are good but again expensive. Solomon Super Mountain 10 are also good. Traditional stiff leather boots are ok for one day but are difficult to dry out fully for the next day in the snow and so on. *Make sure they are fully broken in before you arrive!*

[] **Gaiters.** Ankle length are often sufficient but to be sure, full-length light-weight with a strap to go under the instep of the boot to keep them in place and a full-length zip.

SNOW EQUIPMENT

[] **Crampons.** One pair that fits your boots properly! 10 or 12 point. "Clip-on" bindings are easiest if your boots take this type such as the Grivel G12 NewMatic. If your boots are not designed to take "clip-ons" then models such as the Grivel G10 NewClassic are good. Most new crampons are now sold with integral "anti-balling" plates - if you already have a pair without them, we strongly suggest you buy anti-balling plates. Models such as the Grivel 2F and Charlet Moser S12's can ball up easily without anti-balling plates fitted. If in doubt about fitting or what crampon model to use with your boot, please consult your local outdoor shop for advice.

[] **Ice Axe.** One general mountaineering axe required. 55-65cm depending on your height - again your outdoor shop will advise if you are unsure. There is a large choice available such as Grivel Air Tech; Black Diamond Venom and DMM Cirque.

[] **Glacier / Sun Glasses.** Vital. Must have strong UV protection with reasonable side protection as well.

GENERAL EQUIPMENT

[] **Kit bag / Climbing Rucsac / Day Sac** *Please read carefully!*

Our IMLIL itinerary trip includes portorage of one kit bag for every 2 people on days 1 & 4.

Our LEPINEY itinerary includes portorage of your kit on days 1 and 5.

Our IFNI itinerary includes portorage of your kit on day 5 (day 1 we're driving so portorage is irrelevant)

So on the IMLIL trip, you should have your own day sac (a 30L one should be sufficient to carry your spare clothing, water, camera, food etc for the day) in addition to sharing a 90L kitbag for your general spare clothes, sleeping bag etc that will be portered. Without explaining the ins and outs of a sometimes complicated logistical exercise, take it from us that on the LEPINEY & IFNI trips you will not need a kit bag – only your 35-50L rucsac capable of carrying all your gear for the entire trip. This rucsac will then be portered for you on the appropriate day(s) as outlined above.

If you're looking for a good kit bag, then North Face; Rab and Mountain Equipment all make good ones.

As regards the size of rucsac you should have for the LEPINEY & IFNI trips, it really is a matter of personal choice, how much kit you want to bring and how strong you are! We recommend as compact as possible – e.g. most of our guides use a 40L sac which includes a lot of safety stuff you needn't worry about!

Bear in mind that for summit days out & back from the Mouflon refuge, you will only need to carry gear for that day.

Again if you have any queries or questions on kit bags etc then please contact us for advice.

[] **Sleeping bag.** A good 4 season one to keep you woolly at night! Down is best but more expensive. A huge choice available depending on your budget and what future use you will be putting it to. If you have a few different bags to choose from – bring the one with the lowest temperature rating!

[] **Waterbottle / rehydration system.** We suggest a 2 litre capacity (or a 1 litre with two half litre plastic bottles to refill as you go along). Platypus / CamelBack systems are ok at lower altitudes but will definitely get frozen up high on Toubkal even if they are sold with an insulated tube. They also have a tendency to leak! We recommend a "good old-fashioned" Sigg bottle with insulating pouch.

[] **Headtorch.** Possibly the initial half-hour on summit day will be in the dark. Other than that just usage in the huts at night - so as lightweight as possible. Dare we say it - there is a "dazzling" choice available now! A good one is the Petzl Tikka which is nice and simple!

[] **Trekking pole(s).** If you're not used to using them, then probably not the best to start trying them out on a snowy 4000m peak! However hopefully you do use them as they save your knees from early decay. We recommend you use at least one. Make sure they have snow baskets attached – not the small ones used whilst trekking.

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

[] **Sun screen and lip block.** SPF 20 as a minimum. Apply frequently particularly to nose, ears and lips.

[] **Camera** - Don't forget extra film if you're not on digital. If you do use digital make sure you have enough spare batteries for your camera (the only recharge "facility" is evening times in the Toubkal Mouflon refuge) and remember that cold conditions sap the life out of them. Also a big enough storage card.

[] **Light-weight pair of binoculars** (optional)

[] **Toiletries etc.** Include a light-weight absorbent towel, wet-wipes & toilet roll.

[] **Passport.** A good idea is to photocopy this just in case you lose it - keep the photocopy at the bottom of your rucksack where it won't get lost.

[] **Insurance Certificate / policy.**

[] **Snacks / your favourite hill food** (optional)

[] **Book / pack of cards / travel scrabble**

[] **Cash.** The currency in Morocco is the dirham (dh). There are about 11 dh to the €. Impossible to get dirham outside of Morocco - therefore take Euro, Sterling or US\$ and exchange in the Moroccan airport Bureau de Change. Banks are closed over the weekends - however there are ATMs in the main towns if you want to take out dirham by using your credit card or the like. During the trip all you will need cash for is any extra drinks you wish to purchase, showers you've been lucky enough to have and those extra Mars bars!

[] **Personal First Aid.** Whilst our guides will have a First Aid kit with them - it is not a general dispensary! Bring some small plasters / Compeed etc if you feel your feet may suffer and **any medication you are on and/or require specifically** e.g. Zovirax etc if you are prone to cold sores. Also simple things like paracetamol, brufen and cough/throat lozenges. If you wear contact lenses, make sure you have enough solution or else consider daily disposable sets.

There are no compulsory vaccinations for Morocco but, as always, you should keep Hep. A, Tetanus and possibly Rabies up to date. Consult your GP or a vaccine specialist if you want professional advice. The most common complaint on trips is often diarrhea which can be caused simply by a change of diet or drinking local water which your body will not be used to. You will be able to buy bottled spring-water in all the mountain refuges so there is no need to bring iodine tablets.

USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://www.needlesports.com/> A really good comprehensive website with lots of advice on gear. (Keswick based)

<http://www.rockrun.com/> Another Lakes gear retailer with a good selection of gear.

<http://www.barrabes.com/> Pyrenean based retailer with as big a stock as you will ever need to worry about. If it's not featured on their website it probably doesn't exist or it's not worth buying!

<http://www.scarpa.co.uk/> Boot manufacturers website with good advice on their product line.

<http://www.sportiva.com/> Ditto

For some reading before your trip, we suggest the following books:-

- ✓ The Rough Guide to Morocco **ISBN: 1843533138**
- ✓ Imazighen: Vanishing Traditions of Berber Women **by Geraldine Brooks. ISBN: 0500017387**
- ✓ The Berbers of Morocco **by Alan Keohane. ISBN: 0241129664**



Ouanoukrim & Akioud, opposite Toubkal and both over 4000m give some greater winter mountaineering potential

Miscellaneous information

Food on the trip

Morocco is said to have one of the finest cuisines in the world. Our cooks pride themselves in their cooking, and ensure that all the food on the trek is freshly prepared using local ingredients and that there is plenty for everyone. A typical menu on this trip would be:

Breakfast: Fresh bread with cheese, jam, margarine, tea, coffee, hot chocolate and hot milk.

Lunch: A light lunch consisting of fresh mixed salad, tinned fish or meat, bread and cheese, followed by fresh local fruit.

Afternoon tea: Tea / coffee / hot chocolate with some dates, figs, nuts and biscuits.

Dinner: The evening meal is always a hot meal and is different every night - traditional Moroccan cuisine of Tajine or couscous with meat and vegetables or the occasional pasta meal. This is followed by fresh fruit and the famous mint tea.!

Kit List / Clothes / Weather etc

You can access our extensive suggested equipment list on this pdf. In essence you will need normal winter walking clothes and equipment including crampons, walking ice-axe, a good quality sleeping bag and warm fleece / down jacket etc.

The weather at this time of the year is generally sunny days and cold nights. However this is the winter and therefore it can snow! Weather in these high mountains can be unpredictable and you should be prepared for this. The snow-line is generally around 2500m meaning that by the time you arrive at the Mouflon refuge which is at 3160m, you will be in the snow.

Environmental / Health

All our guides are qualified in remote and wilderness first aid and always carry a fully equipped first aid kit for serious medical emergencies. However this is not a general dispensary - please bring your own supplies of plaster, blister prevention pads, paracetamol etc. and any medication you are on.

There are no compulsory vaccinations for Morocco but, as always, you should keep Hep A, Tetanus, Polio, Typhoid and possibly rabies up to date. Consult your GP or a vaccine specialist for professional advice.

Altitude issues

Although the highest point of these trips is the summit of Toubkal - 4167m, the highest point at which we sleep which is the critical issue, is the Mouflon refuge below Toubkal itself. The refuge is at 3160m and so whilst you may feel some initial effects of this if you are on the Imlil programme (the trek up from Imlil to the refuge is going from 1740m to 3160m), you are unlikely to have any serious AMS issues. Remember it is very important to drink lots and maintain a good hydration level. If you would like to read more on Altitude Mountain Sickness, then please contact us and we will happily send you some light reading material!

Further country information

Further up-to-date travel advice can be had by emailing us, reading our blog <http://toubkalmountainguides.blogspot.com> and/or consulting the UK FCO site:- <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/>

Currency / Visas / Language

Visas for entry into Morocco are not required by nationals of Ireland, the U.K, U.S.A, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and most E.U countries.

The currency in Morocco is the dirham (dh). There are about 11dh to the Euro. It is impossible to get dirham outside of Morocco - therefore take € Euros, £ Sterling or US\$ and exchange over on arrival. Alternatively or in addition, there are plenty of ATM's in the airport and Marrakech. Do not depend on using your credit card for purchases - this is a cash society in the main!

Language is Arabic / Berber but French is also understood / spoken widely. Little or no English spoken / understood outside of main tourist areas.

Time difference = GMT all year.

Insurance

We ask you to effect individual holiday insurance against travel delays, loss of baggage and money, mountain rescue & medical expenses, personal accident and any cancellation costs.

You should note that there are no official mountain rescue services in Morocco and that any evacuation in the event of a serious medical emergency to the nearest hospital will most likely be by land as opposed to helicopter.

We will require documentary evidence of your insurance prior to departure.

Booking the Trip!

In addition to all our knowledge, resources, help and attention to detail before the trip starts, **once we meet you in Marrakech, our prices include:-**

- ✓ accommodation for the 3 OR 4 nights in the mountains depending on the trip - Berber village house, CAF Lepiney & Mouflon mountain refuge
- ✓ all food throughout from the time we leave Marrakech until we get back there
- ✓ all transport costs associated with the official trip itinerary
- ✓ porters / mules to carry all our *communal* gear and food
- ✓ portage of your personal gear as outlined in detail in the above equipment list
- ✓ professional guiding services for the duration of the trip
- ✓ extensive helpful equipment list for Toubkal in winter

The additional costs for you once we meet up would be just bottles of water, drinks outside of meals, any showers charged for separately by the accommodation providers and any additional snacks you may wish to purchase.

You obviously have to **get to Marrakech** (there are any number of cheap flights these days from UK / Europe with Easyjet, Ryanair, Jet4You & BA); **organise travel / medical insurance** (we check on this when you are booking) and **sort out accommodation in Marrakech** either side of your trip. Again there is a huge selection to suit all tastes and budgets.



The summit can be seen! Exiting off the North Ridge onto the summit plateau of Mount Toubkal 4167m

To reserve your place(s) on a trip is simple and straightforward:-

- Go to our reservation page on our secure server <https://www.azru.net/TMGreserve.htm> & complete the details.

On receipt of your reservation form, we will email you to confirm we are reserving your place(s) & send you an invoice for the deposit based on the details submitted.

- Alternatively contact us <http://www.toubkalmountainguides.com/contactus.htm> through our website