

TOUBKAL

Mountain Guides

**Our Experience.
Your Adventure.**



Jebel Toubkal at 4167m is the highest peak in Morocco (& North Africa) and from November to April, provides the winter walker and mountaineer with a challenging objective over 4000m's.

Our Winter 2008/09 programme consists of a combination of **open scheduled trips** with varying itineraries *and* **private trips for small groups** (min 2 pers) that want to choose their own dates, route & itinerary.

Access to the Moroccan High Atlas has never been easier. EasyJet, Ryanair, Atlas-Blue, BA & Jet4You are just some of the airlines that fly daily from a wide selection of European hubs to the ancient trading city of Marrakech.

Many of our previous clients have combined a successful winter ascent of Toubkal with a surfing break out on the Atlantic rollers of the western seaboard, or taken a trip to the dunes of the Sahara desert. Others simply get lost in the souks of Marrakech!

Whatever grabs you – you're sure to find it in this fascinating country.



In addition to these winter programmes, we also run winter mountaineering skills courses and high-level treks. See our website for more details on these.

Winter 2008/09

Jebel Toubkal Ascents & Climbs

Open scheduled trips

DATES	TRIP NAME	PRICE per person
November 24 - 28	Ifni	€ 575
December 29 - Jan 2	Lepiney	€ 575
December 30 - Jan 2	Imlil	€ 475
January 26 - 30	Ifni	€ 575
February 16 - 20	Lepiney	€ 575
March 9 - 13	Lepiney	€ 575
April 6 - 9	Imlil	€ 475
April 13 - 17	Ifni	€ 575

For current availability on these scheduled trips, just go to our blog entry of the 11th January, 2009 on:-

<http://toubkalmountainguides.blogspot.com/>

Some images from our completed 2008/9 winter trips

<http://www.pixagogo.com/6632194102>

Private trip prices for the above itineraries are the same as the Open scheduled trips provided there are at least 3 persons in the group.

Otherwise for a private trip for 2 people for any itinerary, our prices are:

3 day programme € 560 pp
4 day programme € 700 pp
5 day programme € 860 pp

To organise your own private trip, itinerary and dates to suit yourself, just contact us and let us know your ideas!

For up-to-date news, articles, information and stories on other areas of the Moroccan High Atlas, just visit:-

<http://nomadicmorocco.blogspot.com>



Trip itineraries

These itineraries are based on us meeting you in central Marrakech early morning (usually 09.00) on the first day & aiming to get you back there for mid-afternoon on the last day. (Private trips can make alternative meeting arrangements if they so wish.)

	IMLIL 4 day programme	LEPINEY 5 day programme	IFNI 5 day programme
	<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 and a new offering for the 2008/9 season. 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 Oussem, 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 Oussem, 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 Amsouzar 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.

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 based on 1 kit bag shared between 2 people
- ✓ professional guiding services for the duration of the trip
- ✓ extensive helpful equipment list for Toubkal in winter (*freely accessible on our website - PDF format*)

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, Atlas-Blue, 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.

Misc 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 our website.

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!

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.

Fitness / previous experience

Climbing Toubkal in winter generally requires wearing crampons and using a walking ice-axe. However the ascent (by either the south or north cwm routes) is not technical and so **you do not necessarily need prior experience using an axe or crampons** as you will be under the watchful eye of one of our guides. (*We would not recommend you climbing Toubkal in winter without a winter experienced guide if you do not have prior winter walking / climbing experience*).

In terms of fitness, **you should be used to or fit enough to cope with energetic 6-8 hour days in the high mountains for the duration of your trip** bearing in mind that the weather whilst generally favourable can make life much more difficult at 4000m's if it turns nasty.

Further country information

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

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 be by land as opposed to helicopter.

We will require documentary evidence of your insurance prior to departure. TMG have now arranged a link with VentureGuard to make arranging medical / rescue insurance even easier!

(This VentureGuard link is on our website)





Who are Toubkal Mountain Guides?

TMG is a trading name of Wilderplaces Adventure Tours NI Ltd. TMG was set up to focus exclusively on Toubkal area trips and ascents. Our other main Moroccan website is NomadicMorocco.Com which focuses on all our other mountain trips in the Mgoun region and Western High Atlas. We have been running trips in the country for the past 8+ years.

Often we're not just "paperless" but "office-less" as well(!) as we spend a good deal of time out of "civilisation" and up in the mountains working on trips and also developing some health and educational projects in remote Berber mountain villages through an Irish trust (www.amantrust.org) So please bear with us as we whilst we do reply to all our emails, it isn't always by return - no matter what satellite telephone or internet communications technology is around!

Who will be our guide?

Most of us live in Morocco, whilst others may as well do for the amount of time they spend over here! We will of course tell you before your trip starts who your guide will be. Whoever it is, our trip quality is consistently high. Our main guides are:-

<p>Des Clark, an Irishman who has 20+ years of mountain-top experience in Scottish winters (before he got sense!), the Alps, Pyrenees, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile and Iceland.</p> <p>A qualified IML & founding director of Wilderplaces, he now resides in the sunny climes of southern Morocco with his wife and their 3 children.</p>		<p>Matt Low has been in Morocco since 1990 and is the founding director of High Country. Few people know the country as well as this man. Whether it be kayaking, off-roading in "Old Blue", snow or rock-climbing, Matt is the most proficient all rounder there is!</p> <p>Currently masterminding a website on Imlil and its surrounds...</p>	
<p>Kris Palmer is from the USA but has been living over here in Morocco for the past 6 years. Vies with Matt in terms of all-round abilities but probably just pips the post in climbing!</p> <p>Together with his wife, they run their own outdoor adventure company out of Marrakech. Is as passionate about good coffee as Des...</p>		<p>Alex Heude from Ubaye in the French Alps was virtually born in the snow. Both a highly skilled & qualified ski instructor and IML, he also enjoys jumping off summits with a parapente on his back!</p> <p>Now based in south Wales he is a regular to the Moroccan High Atlas scene instructing and guiding with us.</p>	

In addition to these 4 guides, we have a number of other highly experienced European / American guides who partner with us as required - some of whom run their own outdoor adventure companies such as RedRockInternational.Com & Kasbah-Tifawt.Com

Are you insured and how are clients legally protected?

Absolutely! Wilderplaces Adventure Tours (NI) Ltd (and all their trading names) are insured in the UK with Royal Sun Alliance for professional indemnity, public & employers liability. 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. *In addition* we require all our clients to arrange their own medical / travel / repatriation insurance in advance of the trip. We can **recommend VentureGuard to cover all your travel insurance** needs.

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" or what your operating ethos is?

Yes - we strive to offer high quality Toubkal (winter/technical) ascents 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. Compared to the larger travel companies we have a small committed client base - the result of this is that we know most of our clients on an individual level and so can offer a **highly personalised** service before, during and after a trip.

We are a small independent provider and have years of combined experience in leading groups and individuals to some of the most remote and unspoilt areas in this fabulous mountain range.

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.

There are quite a few other companies I've come across offering Toubkal winter trips. Why book with you?!

- Collectively, we are some of the most knowledgeable, experienced and qualified western guides (living) in Morocco and operating on Toubkal. We try harder than almost anyone to make sure you have the best winter Toubkal experience.
- Having a company that is based here in-country is so much more beneficial to clients we believe, than travelling with a company that will probably outsource all your summit aspirations out to other local operators.
- We will be totally honest with you.
- 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! Small groups to us are safer, have more flexibility that climbing a 4000m peak in the winter often requires and much more enjoyable! **Our maximum guide to clients ratio is 1:6 and sometimes less depending on the trip.**
- We have great local staff (cook, kitchen staff, muleteers and porters) which is vital in a country like Morocco!
- We enjoy what we're doing!



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

To reserve your place(s) on a trip:-

- Go to our reservation page on our website (www.toubkalmountainguides.com/reserve.htm) & complete the details. **No payment is required at this stage!**
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 email us:- TMG.office@nomadicmorocco.com
- Or contact us through our website

For general reading about Morocco, we suggest the following books will give you a good feel for this great country:-

- ✓ **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

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