

sahara desert trekking challenge



trip highlights

Trekking through the vast desert and sand dunes of the Sahara desert

Camping under the stars in the Moroccan wilds and experiencing the life of a nomad

Experiencing the warm hospitality of the local Berber crew

Sample the tasty Moroccan cuisine with its fresh fruit and vegetables and slow cooked tagines

Take on this demanding challenge to raise funds for the Royal College of Pathologists

Enjoy the markets and souqs of Marrakech at the end of the challenge



Trip Duration	8 days	Trip Code: SOG3518
Grade	Moderate	
Activities	Trekking, Sightseeing and Camping	
Summary	8 day trip, 5 day trek, 3 nights hotels and 4 nights camping	

welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for your interest in our Sahara Desert Trekking Challenge trip. At World Expeditions we are passionate about our off the beaten track experiences as they provide our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are committed to ensuring that our unique itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups or individuals - philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. Our itineraries will give you the very best travel experience, designed by people with incredible local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. Whether you like your adventures to include trekking, touring, cycling, mountaineering, kayaking or cruising World Expeditions can make it happen for you. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience!!

why travel with World Expeditions?

When planning travel to remote and challenging destinations, many factors need to be considered. Our extra attention to detail and seamless operations on the ground ensure that you will have a memorable experience in Morocco. We take every precaution to ensure smooth logistics, our vehicles and equipment are the best available on the market. Most importantly, our adventures have always sought to benefit the local peoples we interact with, safeguard the ecosystems we explore and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience. You will be accompanied by a guide whose knowledge and passion for Morocco will add a unique dimension to your trip. Their experience and enthusiasm ensures that we maintain the leading edge in adventure travel and therefore providing excellent value for money. Given our local knowledge, experience and excellent leadership, we are quite sure that this tour will be a trip of a lifetime.

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trip dates

2016 22 Oct - 29 Oct

For competitive airfares and stopover ideas to join this adventure, contact our expert staff today to receive a detailed quote.

the trip

Join us on this unique trip to the rugged Sahara desert for five days of trekking through golden sand dunes and windswept plains. With our caravan of camels to carry our gear and local Berbers to guide us, this will be a truly authentic experience in the desert, as well as a physically challenging trek. Morocco is famous for its delicious food, friendly hospitality and natural beauty, and this trip has them all. Yet for most of our time we will be truly in the real Morocco, away from the tourists and enjoying the tranquillity and raw beauty of the desert, a part of the country that not many people from outside get to see.

at a glance

DAY 1	LEAVE LONDON HEATHROW AT 1810 TO OUARZAZATE, MOROCCO (VIA CASABLANCA)
DAY 2	OUARZAZATE - RAS N KHEL APPROX 2.5 HOURS WALK
DAY 3	RAS N KHEL - AIT OUNIR - APPROX 5 HOURS WALKING
DAY 4	AIT OUNIR - ERG SMAR - APPROX 5 HOURS TREKKING
DAY 5	ERG SMAR - DJEBEL BANI FOOTHILLS - APPROX 5 HOURS WALKING
DAY 6	DJEBEL BANI FOOTHILLS - ERG LIHOUDI - OUARZAZATE APPROX 5 HOURS TREKKING
DAY 7	OUARZAZATE - MARRAKECH
DAY 8	DEPART MARRAKECH FOR THE UK

what's included

- International flights and taxes
- Experienced English speaking local leader
- Airport transfers
- Camping equipment including twin share tents, dining tent and toilet tent
- Accommodation in 3* hotels on twin share basis
- Full expedition medical kit
- Private vehicle transportation throughout
- Boiled drinking water during trek
- Camel handlers to carry all personal and group equipment
- Trek staff including group leader, camel handlers, camp hands and kitchen staff
- All park entrance fees and trekking permits
- Celebration meal in Marrakech
- Meals as per itinerary

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Leave London Heathrow at 1810 to Ouarzazate, Morocco (via Casablanca)

Flight AT 801 (Royal Maroc Airlines) will leave London Heathrow at 1810 via Casablanca arriving in Ouarzazate, Morocco at 0050 the following day (23/10/2016).

Upon arrival in Ouarzazate we will be met by our friendly local team of Berber guides who will drive us to our centrally located hotel for a good nights rest.

meals: NIL

DAY 2 Ouarzazate - Ras n khel approx 2.5 hours walk

This morning we will have a welcome briefing to discuss the trekking and the upcoming itinerary, and will be our chance to ask any questions to our guides. We will then set off by private vehicle towards the Anti Atlas Mountains. The drive is beautiful along the fertile Draa Valley with its Kasbah and Ksours surrounded by thousands of swaying palm trees. As we pass Zagora the scenery

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becomes more arid and the first arid signs of the desert begin to appear. When we reach Mhamid, the last oasis before the Sahara, we will meet the caravan and start the camel trek towards Ras N khel where we will overnight at our camp in our tents, and enjoy dinner under the stars.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 3 Ras n Khel - Ait Ounir - approx 5 hours walking

After breakfast today we will make the most of the cool temperatures in the morning as we continue on our path through the desert. As we follow the camels the pace will be gentle as we trek past the Jurassic cliffs of the southern Draa. We will climb our first golden dunes at Ait Ounir, before descending into a peaceful Waddi to camp for the night. The camp is surrounded by Tamarisk trees bringing a welcome relief from the sun and is an ideal canopy for dining under.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 4 Ait Ounir - Erg Smar - approx 5 hours trekking

On a clear day we can watch a beautiful sunrise over the dunes, before starting another fascinating walking day through the desert. We head north today via Erg Zager dunes to cross the Draa dry river, the longest river in Morocco. Occasionally tamaris trees will appear between the dunes and acacias trees animate the arid regs, with the impressive Jebel Bani mountain chain in the distance. In the afternoon we will reach our camp at Erg Smar.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 5 Erg Smar - Djebel Bani Foothills - approx 5 hours walking

The scenery will become truly spectacular and you might think you are in the film Lawrence of Arabia, as mighty dunes stretch to the horizon in both directions. We will continue the trek, stopping for regular water breaks and to assess the fitness and morale of the team. After around 5 hours we should arrive mid afternoon at the banks of Ouled Mzouaria river, and camp for the evening.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 6 Djebel Bani foothills - Erg Lihoudi - Ouarzazate approx 5 hours trekking

For our last day of trekking we will head North towards the impressive dunes of Erg Lihoudi. We will start to re enter civilization here as you notice the irrigation canals that feed the extensive agricultural network in this area. After five hours we will arrive rendezvous with some other members of the World Expeditions team who will have a celebratory lunch ready for us to enjoy after our memorable trekking challenge. We will then drive back to Ouarzazate to enjoy a refreshing ticket and a chance to relax!

meals: B,L,D

DAY 7 Ouarzazate - Marrakech

After breakfast we make our by private transfer over the Atlas Mountains to the vibrant city of Marrakesh. We should arrive around midday, leaving all of the afternoon to explore the souks, markets, Royal Palaces and parks of this fantastic city. In the evening we will meet up again for a final dinner to discuss our favourite memories of the challenge.

meals: B,D

DAY 8 Depart Marrakech for the UK

We will have an early transfer back to the airport for our return flight to London Heathrow (via Casablanca) on AT 406 with Royal Maroc Airlines. Arriving back in the UK at 1650 on the 29/10/2106

meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

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fast facts

Countries Visited:

Morocco

Visas:

Please check visa requirements with your reservations consultant*

Vaccinations:

Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

Private Groups:

Private group options are available for this trip*

Singles:

A single supplement is available for this trip*

Leader:

Expert local leader

Brochure Reference:

Africa, Middle East

*Ask our staff for more information.

country information

The oldest known inhabitants of Morocco are the Berber people. They have occupied the area for at least 5000 years however their exact origins are unknown. As early as the 6th century BC Phoenician traders established depots on the Atlantic coast, forging relations with Berber tribes to enable the exploitation of raw materials. With the fall of Carthage in the 1st century CE (Common Era) the Romans annexed much of the northern coastal plain and allied themselves with Berber leaders which facilitated their control of economically viable regions, especially for the cultivation of wheat and olives. In the 5th century, the Roman presence ended with a wave of invasions by the Vandals, Visigoths and Byzantine Greeks and Christianity was introduced. There was already a significant Jewish presence at that time. In the 7th century, Arabs conquered the region bringing Islam to Morocco. Berber tribes adopted Islam, adapting it to encompass their folk traditions and beliefs. The first Muslim dynasty was founded by Idriss I, an Arab descendant of the Prophet Mohammed, who broke away from the Abbasid Caliphate based in Baghdad. Morocco achieved its greatest heights under subsequent Berber dynasties, the Almoravids and the Almohads who came from south of the Atlas Mountains and the Merinids from Figuig in the East. They embarked on a great wave of building and expansion, dominating the Maghreb and Andalusian Spain for over two centuries. In the mid 16th century, the region was ruled for close to 100 years by the Arab Saadian dynasty, followed in the mid 17th century by the Alaouite dynasty, claiming to be descendants of the Prophet and who reign to this day. King Mohamed VI is the current ruler of Morocco and has instituted considerable social reforms since he came to the throne in 1999.

Prior to the First World War, when European powers were eyeing Morocco as a region of interest, the Algeciras Conference of 1906 conferred control of Morocco to France and Spain. The treaty of Fez resulted in Morocco becoming a French Protectorate in 1912, while Spain retained control of an enclave in the north and the Western Sahara. The French exploited Morocco's mineral wealth and built roads, French quarters in the major cities and military garrisons in the more remote areas. In 1944, the Istiqlal (Independence) Party was active in the move towards independence, which was finally proclaimed in 1956.

Most Moroccans (over 98%) are Sunni Moslems of Arab, Arab-Berber, Arabized Berber and Berber descent. There is also a minority of Gnaoua or Haratin descended from sub Saharan African slaves. The Jewish population has decreased considerably since the 1950s and the Christian population consists of foreign nationals, mainly French. Morocco's official language is Classical Arabic although Moroccan Arabic or Darija is the lingua franca. 12 million of Morocco's population of 31 million speak a Berber language (there are 3 regional languages, Riff, Shilha and Tamazight). Although education is compulsory to grade 5, Morocco's literacy rate remains around 50%. Morocco is renowned for its arts and crafts – music, ceramics textiles and jewellery. Its incredibly diverse and stunning landscape, good roads, charming and hospitable people and delicious cuisine all contribute to an extraordinary feast for the senses and a very special experience for the visitor.

a typical day

After a wholesome breakfast we are usually on the trail by around 7.30 - 7.45 am and walk for around 3-4 hours. Lunch is usually a 1 hour break. The afternoon walk is generally a little shorter and camp is usually reached by around 3.30 - 4.30 pm. Once we have reached camp and set up, there is time to rest, explore the surrounding area and villages or sit and chat. Dinner is usually served between 6-7 pm. This period of your trekking day is a nice time to relax and enjoy your surroundings, the wilderness, mountains and people among it. Much of the enjoyment of an expedition is in the journey itself.

hygiene

Provided we are advised in advance of your departure we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please

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responsible travel

The environments we travel through are fragile. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence. World Expeditions were the proud recipients of the inaugural Australian National Travel Industry's Environmental Achievement award for our Responsible Travel Guidebook. This detailed guide to responsible and sustainable travel is provided to all World Expeditions clients before they travel. Please ask your consultant if you have not received your copy of our award winning book. Alternatively, you may like to download a copy from our website www.worldexpeditions.com

trip grading Moderate

This expedition involves trekking through undulating desert, for up to six hours a day at a steady pace. To undertake this level of activity you will need a good level of trekking fitness and be sure-footed. As a minimum, we recommend 45 minutes of aerobic type exercise, three to five times a week for three months leading up to your trek.

adventure travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your consultant or travel agent.

ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance (at least 1 month prior to your trip) to determine whether we can cater to such dietary requirements on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip, and therefore, we strongly encourage that travellers with life-threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

what you carry

In your daypack you will need to carry extra warm clothing (depending on the altitude, location and weather), a rainjacket, water bottle, film and camera gear, valuables and personal items such as sunscreen, lip-eze etc. Porters and mules carry all group gear and your trek pack.

equipment required

Specialist gear required include walking boots and day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

vehicles & safety

During the course of your trip, we will use a variety of vehicles, all which are fit for purpose and the conditions encountered. It should be noted that laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country and on occasion some vehicles may not have seat belts fitted. While game viewing within a national park could be one example. Whilst we do not include animal rides on most of our trips, there are occasions where it may be possible to undertake them optionally and to do so is at your own risk. Note that helmets and professional riding equipment are not available in all circumstances.

what's not included

- Tips
- Travel Insurance

info nights

World Expeditions invites you to attend our inspiring adventure travel information nights. These special evenings are designed to inform and entertain and are hosted by our most experienced and passionate adventure travellers and mountaineers. Ask our staff for a info night schedule or register on our website - www.worldexpeditions.com. Shows can fill early so it is important to register your attendance so we know to save a seat, or two!

private groups

The adventures featured in our brochures, and on our website, are just a starting point for many of our private group travellers. Working closely with our Groups Department we can organise custom designed itineraries for groups of friends, clubs, charity's, schools or even work colleagues. Our team will assist you with all aspects of your private group adventure from itinerary design to group flights. Contact our team today.

subscribe to our e-newsletter

To keep up to date with our new and exciting adventure opportunities, special promotions and adventure news, subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter! You can do this on line through our website, www.worldexpeditions.com or contact our office.



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important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

social networking

Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/WorldExpeditions>

trip availability

If this trip seems right for you then we encourage you to call us now to check availability. There are many reasons why you may not be able to join your desired departure and limited space on our small group departures is just one of them. Many of our adventures require us to secure services on your behalf; such as trekking permits, train travel and visa invitation letters. The demand is increasing each year making it difficult to join a trip last minute. To ensure we can assist you onto your adventure of a lifetime we ask that you check your trip availability with our team at your earliest convenience.

how to book

To book a World Expeditions trip, you will need to complete a booking form and pay a non refundable deposit which you can do by using our online booking function for most trips, or if you prefer, download a booking form from the website and return to us by fax, or mail your booking form and deposit to your nearest World Expeditions office or travel agent. We can also help you with any additional arrangements that you require, such as competitive airfares to get you to your destination, stopovers, pre or post trip accommodation or any additional tours that you wish to take in conjunction with the main World Expeditions trip.