

# Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent



## Highlights

Explore the Atlas Mountains around Marrakech and hike up Mount Toubkal on this five-day tour with four nights' accommodation. You'll visit traditional Berber villages, picnic in idyllic countryside and have your meals rustled up by your very own cook.

Marrakech. Bustling souks, labyrinthine bazaars and stalls that bow under the weight of rainbow-coloured spice pyramids. There are few more exotic places you can be in just three hours from London. But cities rarely offer breathing space and that's where this tour steps in. Just outside the city lies the Atlas Mountain range. It stretches across Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia for about 1500 miles and the patch just outside Marrakech is great for exploring on foot.

Wander through red-clay Berber villages, picnic beside springs set amid juniper trees, and hike along high mountain passes. This five-day tour is the perfect antidote to the hectic city life of nearby Marrakech. Your days will be spent walking through magnificent mountain scenery and getting back to basics in traditional bivouac accommodation. But the most challenging and inspiring point of the tour has to be the climb up Mount Toubkal – the highest peak in the High Atlas range. Once at the top you'll be rewarded with views that coast all the way down to the Sahara.

If you would like us to arrange your entire stay in Morocco, including airport transfers, a night in a local Berber guest house in Imilil and 2 nights staying in a boutique riad after your trek, please select the Trek & Accommodation Package in the drop down box at the bottom of this page.

## Is it for me?

This is one of our most popular treks in the Atlas Mountains. It offers an excellent balance of valleys, peaks and passes giving you a taste of the high altitudes and the Berber Villages.

The trek is of moderate difficulty with days ranging from 5 - 8 hours walking. The biggest challenge is topping Toubkal.

Toubkal is a strenuous climb, and you will need to be fit, it is though a moderate trek rather than a technical climb so you needn't be a hardened mountaineer. That said, if you are planning on tackling the mountain in the winter months (November to April), then it is imperative that you have suitable prior experience using crampons and ice axes. Your guides are experienced mountaineers usually with many years of winter ascents under their belt. They will all have undergone extensive training at the Royal Moroccan Federation of skiing and mountaineering (equivalent to the British Mountain Leader Summer scheme), however they are not qualified winter mountain leaders according to International qualifications.

As with all our Atlas Mountain treks, your cook will prepare all your meals and your baggage will be carried by mule, so you don't need to worry about carrying all of your belongings with you. Accommodation is in a mix of village guesthouses, refuges and camping, so expect basic but comfortable conditions.

## Accommodation

Prices from

**259** GBP (4-5 days) per person

## Why book with Tourdust?

- ✓ The Best Local Operators  
We handpick the best local operators
- ✓ Local Price Guarantee  
Pay what you would locally with our Best Price Guarantee
- ✓ Secure Online Payments  
Safe and easy online booking



- ✓ ABTA Bonding for your protection  
We even throw in complimentary Supplier Failure Cover

  
ABTA No. L7477

Accommodation on all our Atlas treks is in simple Berber Gites, mountain refuges or camping depending on the season and location. Gites typically offer shared bathroom facilities (with hot showers) and simple private rooms. Whilst basic, gites are usually owned by villagers and have terraces with wonderful views. Refuges are typical of mountain refuges worldwide, offering very basic accommodation for trekkers. Bunk-rooms sleeping 10-20 people are the order of the day, most do offer hot showers. Camping is in modern tents with a communal mess tent (all equipment is provided, but you are expected to pitch your own tent). This trek tends to use a combination of village Gites, camping and mountain refuges.

Our Atlas treks include all meals. Your cook will prepare traditional simple Moroccan meals. Lunch usually consists of a large salad, bread and a tagine followed by fruit (taken at a picturesque picnic spot), dinner usually consists of soup, tagine and bread. Breakfast is a simple spread of fresh bread and jams. Without exception, copious amounts of mint tea are served throughout the day both at meal-times and during the trek. Salad and fruit is washed in sterilised water and bottled drinking water is available to buy throughout the treks.



To keep the cost of your trek down to a minimum, we use local grand taxis for your transfers between Marrakech and Imlil. These taxis are Mercedes and licensed by the Government. It is sensible to take note of the taxi license number so that if you forget any of your belongings in the taxi, or you are not happy with the driving, then your driver will be traceable. When being met at the airport, your driver will be holding a Tourdust sign. When being met at the riad, the driver will meet you at your riad and walk you to the taxi. Because cars are restricted in the medina in the afternoons and evenings, on your return journey back to your Marrakech accommodation you should

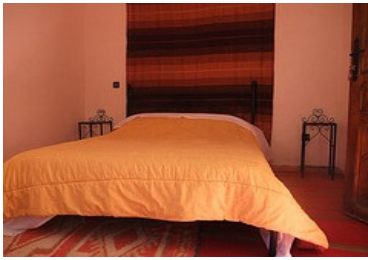
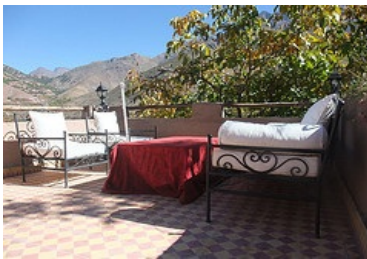
call ahead to your riad to ask them to send someone to meet you, as your driver will not be able to walk you to the riad.

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#### Boutique Marrakech Package

Treat yourself to a stay in a stylish, boutique riad in Marrakech and let us take care of your entire trip to Morocco. The optional package adds return airport transfers, a night before your trek in a simple Imlil guesthouse and then two nights after the trek in a boutique Marrakech Riad.

Your first night will be in a family run guest house in the pretty mountain town of Imlil. The guest house has a roof terrace with lovely views and a small communal area downstairs for colder nights. Rooms are simple, but clean with en-suite facilities. Dinner is included in your stay. Here are some pictures of the guest house:



After your trek, you'll stay two nights in a boutique riad in the heart of Marrakech's ancient medina.

Marrakech's medina is chock a block full of riads - traditional buildings built around a courtyard which have been converted into boutique accommodation. Located mostly in the winding derbs that branch off from the small market streets, these hidden oases provide a calm antidote to the lively souks. Don't be misled by their less than salubrious exteriors, riads tend to be upmarket, often luxurious affairs.

Staying in one of four riads, all owned and renovated by a British couple, you can expect stylish and elegant accommodation, a welcome oasis to the hustle and bustle of the medina. Your riad will have a maximum of six bedrooms, all of which have their own unique and individual style. All rooms are ensuite with air conditioning with thoughtful features such as an i-pod docking station. In addition, all rooms have a safe and wifi. The rooms all look out onto the central courtyard and there are several communal areas including a lovely roof terrace decked out with sun loungers and a lounge with an open fire, tv and a honesty box bar. In the courtyard you will find a small plunge pool where you can soak your hot and weary feet after pounding the souks all day. No children under the age of 12 are permitted to stay at the riads, guaranteeing a calm and relaxing experience.



Breakfast is included in your stay and can be taken in the courtyard or on the roof terrace. Your breakfast consists of pastries, breads, jams, fresh juice and your choice of tea or coffee. The offering each day is different and it is all beautifully presented.

Dinner can be arranged at your riad. This needs to be booked in advance, as all meals are prepared daily. The three course meal will be enjoyed by candlelight either on the roof terrace or on the patio and is prepared using the freshest in-season products.

### Itinerary

Please note, itineraries are subject to change depending on weather and the condition of the group.

Following is the itinerary for the five day trek, please select the 4 day option below to see the four day itinerary.

#### Day 1 – Marrakech – Imi Oughlad – Tizi n'Tachte – Tiziane

Early morning departure at around 9.00am from Marrakech for a pleasant drive south through the Moulay Brahim gorge and valleys. You'll arrive at the foothills of the western high Atlas Mountains and start your first walk at Imi Oughlad. This is also where you'll meet your Berber muleteer crew. Walk for two hours to the Tizi n'Tachte and then on for another half an hour to Imi n'Ifri and a picnic lunch. It's then a slow hike for about two and a half hours to Assif n'Ait Oussaden and the red-clay terraced village of Tiziane. You'll stay in bivouac accommodation / gite depending on the weather and time of year.

(5 hours walking)

Meals included: Lunch and Dinner

#### Day 2 Tiziane – Tizi n'Taghrhourte – D'knt

After breakfast, set off on a hike up along the Assif n'Ait Oussaden valley. You'll walk through walnut groves to Tizi n'Taghrhourte and along a flat stretch to Assaka spring for your picnic lunch. In the afternoon you'll hike to the Berber village of D'knt or Agouns n Assoul where you'll enjoy dinner and spend the night in a bivouac / gite depending on the weather and time of year.

(6 hours walking)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### Day 3 - D'knt – Tizi n'Tagdalte – Tizi Oussemm

In the morning, you'll hike for three hours through walnut groves, fields of corn and barley and on to Tizi n'Tagdalte where you'll picnic by a small spring surrounded by juniper trees. After lunch you'll hike for another three hours down winding tracks to a small river and the start of the valley of Assif n'Ait Oussaden. Here you reach the village of Tizi Oussemm and then it's up to the summer village of Tamsoult where you'll camp for the night / gite depending on the weather and the time of year..

(6 hours walking)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### Day 4 – Âazib Tamsoult –Tizi Aguelzim – Toubkal Refuge

After breakfast you'll hike eastwards to Tizi Aguelzim. Then it's a further three hours walking to the Toubkal Refuge where you'll have dinner and spend the night in the refuge.

(5 hours walking)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

#### Day 5 – Toubkal Refuge – Summit Jbel Toubkal – Sidi Chamharouch – Imlil – Marrakech

After a very early breakfast at around 6am, you'll climb for three hours up to the highest peak in the Maghreb. When you've had time to relax and regain your energy levels, you'll hike back down to the hostel for a picnic lunch. Afterwards, you'll set off northwards, along the higher slopes of the valley of the Assif n'Isouhouanem n'Ouagounss towards the shrine of Sidi Chamharouch. After that, it's two hours more walking downhill to the village of Imlil where you'll catch your transfer back to Marrakech. Depending on the pace of your walking, you'll be back in Marrakech at around 5pm - 6pm.

(8-9 hours walking)

Meals included: Breakfast and Lunch

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## TREK & BOUTIQUE MARRAKECH PACKAGE

### Day 1: Arrival

You will be picked up by a local taxi from Marrakech airport and transferred to the small town of Imlil in the Atlas Mountains. You will be staying in a family run guest house and will enjoy a traditional Moroccan dinner on the roof terrace (weather permitting)

Meals included: Dinner

### Day 2: – Imlil – Imi Oughlad – Tizi n'Tachte – Tiziane

You'll start your first walk at Imi Oughlad. This is also where you'll meet your Berber muleteer crew. Walk for two hours to the Tiz n'Tachte and then on for another half an hour to Imi n'Ifri and a picnic lunch. It's then a slow hike for about two and a half hours to Assif n'Ait Oussaden and the red-clay terraced village of Tiziane. You'll stay in bivouac accommodation / gite depending on the weather and time of year.

(5 hours walking)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 3: Tizziane – Tizi n'Taghrhourte – D'knt

After breakfast, set off on a hike up along the Assif n'Ait Oussaden valley. You'll walk through walnut groves to Tizi n'Taghrhourte and along a flat stretch to Assaka spring for your picnic lunch. In the afternoon you'll hike to the Berber village of D'knt or Agouns n Assoul where you'll enjoy dinner and spend the night in a bivouac / gite depending on the weather and time of year.

(6 hours walking)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 4: - D'knt – Tizi n'Tagdalte – Tizi Oussem

In the morning, you'll hike for three hours through walnut groves, fields of corn and barley and on to Tizi n'Tagdalte where you'll picnic by a small spring surrounded by juniper trees. After lunch you'll hike for another three hours down winding tracks to a small river and the start of the valley of Assif n'Ait Oussaden. Here you reach the village of Tizi Oussem and then it's up to the summer village of Tamsoult where you'll camp for the night / gite depending on the weather and the time of year..

(6 hours walking)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 5: – Âazib Tamsoult – Tizi Aguelzim – Toubkal Refuge

After breakfast you'll hike eastwards to Tizi Aguelzim. Then it's a further three hours walking to the Toubkal Refuge where you'll have dinner and spend the night in the refuge.

(5 hours walking)

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 6: – Toubkal Refuge – Summit Jbel Toubkal – Sidi Chamharouch – Imlil – Marrakech

After a very early breakfast at around 6am, you'll climb for three hours up to the highest peak in the Maghreb. When you've had time to relax and regain your energy levels, you'll hike back down to the hostel for a picnic lunch. Afterwards, you'll set off northwards, along the higher slopes of the valley of the Assif n'Isouhouanem n'Ouagounss towards the shrine of Sidi Chamharouch. After that, it's two hours more walking downhill to the village of Imlil where you'll catch your transfer back to Marrakech. Depending on the pace of your walking, you'll be back in your riad in Marrakech at around 5pm - 6pm.

(8-9 hours walking)

Meals included: Breakfast and Lunch

### Day 7: Marrakech

A day at leisure to explore the sites and souks of Marrakech. You can see [here](#) for ideas of what to do and see.

Meals included: Breakfast

### Day 8: Departure

You will be transported back to the airport in time to catch your flight home.

Meals included: Breakfast

## Details

### Getting there

Flying from the UK... Marrakech has an international airport (RAK) which is serviced by several airlines flying direct from the UK. The airport is about six kilometres outside the city centre and you can catch a taxi into the medina, or arrange a transfer through your riad.

#### From the South East:

Gatwick: Easy Jet, British Airways and Thomson

Heathrow: Bmi

Luton: Ryanair

Stansted: Ryanair

#### From the Midlands:

East Midlands: Ryanair

#### From the North:

Manchester: Easy jet and Thomson both have several departures a week.

From within Morocco.... If you are planning on visiting Fes before or after your trip, there is an excellent train

service linking the two cities. Your tour guide can help you buy tickets at the station.

If you are planning to visit Essaouira, there are regular buses between the two cities - it takes about three hours and costs around £10

Joining Instructions... You will be picked up by local taxi from your hotel in Marrakech at 9.00am on the morning of your departure. If your flight arrives in Marrakech around 9.00 you can be picked up from the airport instead. Please remember to let us know where you are staying so that we can confirm these instructions. The tour normally finishes on the last day at around 5.00pm with a drop off in Marrakech. Pick up and drop off times can be adapted to meet incoming / outgoing flights.

#### Price includes

Price is per person for a group of 2-4 people and includes transfers to and from Marrakech, tour guide, cook, all meals, mules to carry your bags and accommodation in a Berber village or camping. If you are travelling alone please contact us as there is often the opportunity to join a group.

#### Price details

If you are travelling alone, please contact us as there is often the opportunity to join another group.

#### Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

#### Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed

#### Travellers should bring

You will be sent a full kit list, along with all of your pre-departure information, once we have received your booking.

### Reviews (11)

#### Reviews of this experience

“ A fantastic experience in a beautiful landscape; I loved staying in the villages and mountain retreats. It was my first multi day trek. However I'll defiantly be back for more. My only wish was that my trek was longer!

Mustapha was my guide. I was delighted with the service provided throughout the trek by Mustapha and the two muleteers. Mustapha was great company, friendly and professional and really enhanced my experience. The food was excellent and all transfers went like clockwork. ”

Andrew Hale reviewing Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent

“ Guide (Mohammad) was great, set a good pace, knew how much time to spend engaging with us and how much to leave us alone, friendly. Great guy - a mountain marathon runner with a slightly surprising array of card tricks. Food was amazing and the chef really friendly. The trek overall was brilliant - I've recommended it to friends and family. Thanks for an amazing trip, and pass on our thanks to Mohamed and crew. He was there to welcome us at the end and was very friendly. ”

Jake Lomax reviewing Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent

“ We completed the 4 day version of the Classic Berber Villages and Toubkal Ascent at the end of October/start of November 2011. We booked as a couple and were joined by another solo male traveller who luckily we got on really well with, we all appreciated having someone else on the trip but also that it was a very small group.

Our driver picked us up at 9am from the door of our riad as promised, and we drove to meet our guide, muleteers and mules at the start of the route. They had already sorted some equipment we needed to borrow like sleeping bags (to avoid extra luggage on the plane) and drove the other guy to their shop in Imlil so he could borrow some other things.

It's an easyish hike on the first day, we had an amazing lunch on a grassy plateau with the first of many stunning views. The muleteers do an amazing job preparing a range of fresh foods for lunch and dinner and manage to present it beautifully. And let's not forget the constant supply of lovely tea!

We then hiked to the first village where we stayed in a local run gite which was comfortable enough.

We found the 2nd day's hiking hard. The first few hours hiking through villages was really interesting and colourful, followed by a harder uphill hike with the sun beating down on us to where we stopped for lunch. The hiking after lunch was thankfully much shorter to our refuge for the

night. The refuge was a great little building with a waterfall right behind. The size and personalities of our group made for a really good atmosphere in places like this, it didn't matter that we were freezing cold and didn't speak the same language, some tea, food, music and card games made for fun evenings together! You tend to reach the place you're sleeping quite early in the day. I'd suggest cleaning up, sorting yourself out for the evening and wrapping up warm as soon as you arrive, and pack some stuff to do! Books, music and card games supplemented chatting to keep us entertained.

Day 3 has a fairly difficult uphill nicknamed '90 zigzags' but when you pause for breath and water the views behind are increasingly amazing. The walk to the 'base camp' refuge after is an easier gradient and we got there by lunch (like I said, lots of down time). This is a large refuge with many groups going to or returning from the summit and their guides. It may be different if there are groups you can get to know but with a language barrier we didn't really chat to the others and preferred the smaller refuge from the day before. Still, comfortable sleeping arrangements, and a nice lounge area.

On our summit day we set off after an early breakfast before 6 (in the dark) and got to see the sun rise over the mountains ahead as we climbed. People talked about 'the first bit being the hardest' before we left but there's not much change in gradient until the last 10 minutes! It took us 3 hours to reach the summit and we had to use crampons for about half because of quite deep snow that was frozen quite solid. The views from the top are stunning and totally worth it. We were up there for about half an hour and were lucky enough to meet only one other climber at the top. As soon as we started descending it seemed less real that we'd been there. Glad we've got pictures and videos to remind me!

After lunch at the refuge we walked all the way down to Imlil (on a different route to the way up) which was straightforward but looong, and we were weary by the time we reached the Imlil shop to settle up for the things we'd borrowed.

A car met us outside the shop and drove us to Marrakech without a problem, however when we got there it was clear that the driver did not know how to get us back to our riads, and actually became quite confrontational about it when we said we didn't want to be dropped on the wrong side of the medina. He was not a taxi like the car on our way out, we got the impression that he had been asked to take us because he was heading that way. Luckily we could use internet mobile to look up the number of our riad and one of the boys from there came out to meet us and direct him. It was a shame to sour the end of our experience with a bit of a shortcut gone wrong.

Overall, a brilliant experience. Our guide, Mohammed spoke excellent English, was very informative and was a great pacemaker. The muleteers Ibrahim and Mohammed did a great job, spoke little English but their personalities shone through. We took everything on Tourdust's suggested list but did not need water tablets as bottled water was readily available to but at least once per day. We would recommend plenty of light and warm layers and both had sports 'skin' long sleeved tops which proved invaluable. We struck very lucky with the weather (no rain) but had both hot and cold climates to dress for.

Overall, a 5 star unforgettable experience and good value for money. ”

Alex Nicholson reviewing Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent

“ The 5day Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent was the highlight of our 2wk trip in Morocco. The guide and cook were both very friendly, respectful, and informative. The food was amazing - we wanted to take Rashid home with us! It was very pleasant walking through the villages, with the days getting progressively harder - a perfect build-up to the final 2days of great ascents. Climbing Toubkal was extremely rewarding, meeting various lovely people on that final day. We highly recommend this trek to others, and for those who have already booked it, additional advice would be to take a pack of cards and interesting books because there's so much relaxing time at the end of each day of trekking! Thank-you Tourdust & Thank-You Abdulla & Rashid!!! ”

Alanna reviewing Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent

“ We had a wonderful trip - highlight of 2011! Everything ran like clockwork, the care and attention from the team was first class. The trekking was fantastic - challenging but just enough so. I don't think we would have changed a thing. Thank you ”

RachaelErskine reviewing Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent

“ a great trip. Organisation was very simple and smooth, and the walk itself - through villages, along valleys and up to the summit of Toubkal was wonderful - altogether a great experience. ”

tom howes reviewing Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent

“ Overall, I was really impressed with the trek and it was definitely the highlight of our trip to Morocco. We stayed in relatively isolated villages, saw few other travelers, interacted with Berbers, saw amazing challenging hiking around the valleys and up Mount Toubkhal. I'd highly

recommend it to anyone who wanted to do something that was definitely off the beaten track in Morocco. ”

Jenna Jadin reviewing Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent

“ We really can't speak highly enough of our holiday. You and Ben were a pleasure to deal with, knowledgeable, helpful with no pressure or hassle.

Our guide Mohamed and our muleteer Mohamed were a delight - solicitous but never intrusive. You seriously under sell the gourmet element of the trek - every meal was a feast, fabulously presented in wonderful settings. Mohamed Aktaz's house was great and chips a novel but welcome sight!

Some specific suggestions:

- add a water bottle to the kit list. We had tablets as a precaution but anticipated water being provided en-route.
- weather link from your site was helpful, we probably should have taken less "winter" kit on the back of this.
- the 1:50,000 map (Toubkal) from Stamford's was well worth having

Adrian really enjoyed the Toubkal summit - up and down in three hours despite a broken crampon! ”

AdrianBelton reviewing Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent

“ I would definitely recommend this trip to other travellers.

Everything ran like clockwork. Mohammed met us at the airport and took us to our riad in Marrakech which was a lovely place right in the centre but quiet as a retreat. We loved sitting on the upstairs terrace chilling out and having cups of mint tea prepared by their lovely staff.

On the trek Mohammed picked us up at 9am and we were taken to the start where we met our guide Mohammed, our cook Hammed and our Mule who we named Janet.

We spent a lovely 5 days trekking and were really looked after by Mohammed and Hammed. The food was amazing and nothing was too much trouble for them.

The climb up Toubkal was amazing. Lots of snow and beautiful views.

We met some lovely people in the villages.

We will definitely like to return to climb some more peaks. ”

Kevin Dawes reviewing Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent

“ We would highly recommend booking a trek with Tourdust. We had a tailor made 4 day trek with friendly, professional guides. It was fun and well organised with good accommodation and great food. Lots of great memories and stunning photos.

We had an amazing time, Mohammed and Ioshum were both really helpful. Took us into the village in the evenings to see the village celebrating Eid, played football with the kids in the village. We felt safe. Food was excellent, had our own impromptu cookery course with Mohammed. On the last day Lucy went with Ioshum for a harder walk and I stayed with Mohammed so catered to both levels of fitness ”

RuthCrook reviewing Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent

“ Mohamed Aztat, a fluent speaker of English, French, Berber and Spanish is equally at home taking a family group through the low level M'goun valleys or experienced trekkers and climbers up the steepest slopes. ”

LonelyPlanet reviewing Classic Berber Villages & Toubkal Ascent