

Team Prospect Sahara Trek

19 -26 March 2023

Prospect
Hospice



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Trip overview

The Trek

This trek in the Moroccan Sahara gives you an insight into this vast and diverse landscape as well as the Berber way of life. You will spend some time trekking in the Imlil Valley before embarking on two full days and two half days trekking across ancient dried up river beds, sand dunes and vast sun-baked plains of the desert. Camping each night gives you a chance to experience the stunning stars in the night sky (weather permitting) and the traditional Berber cuisine cooked by the team is second to none.

Morocco

Situated in North West Africa, the Kingdom of Morocco is a country with a population of over 35 million people. Morocco has a diverse geography with both Atlantic and Mediterranean coastlines in addition to a rugged mountainous and desert interior. The mighty Atlas Mountains and vast Sahara Desert make Morocco an adventure lover's paradise, and Marrakech is a wonderful place to visit with its spicy aromas, peaceful mosques, diverse entertainers and a cacophony of merchants in the bustling medina.

Sahara

The Sahara covers an area of over 3,600,000 square miles making it the third largest desert on the planet (after Antarctica and the Arctic respectively). It stretches from the Mediterranean and Atlantic to the north, the Red Sea to the east, and as far south as the Niger River. The Sahara is the world's hottest desert with record temperatures exceeding 50°C. Despite its inhospitable conditions, the Sahara has many species of flora such as acacia, palms and grass which have adapted to the arid conditions.

Berbers

The Berbers (or Amazighen – 'free people') are an ethnic group indigenous to North Africa whose culture can be traced back over 4,000 years. Traditionally, Berber men take care of livestock and Berber women take care of the home and make handicrafts for use around the home and to sell. The lifestyle is generally nomadic or semi-nomadic and there are large Berber communities in the rural parts of the country.



What is the experience like?

Who accompanies us?

You will be accompanied by professional English-speaking Berber guides who have an excellent knowledge of culture and hiking in the region. The guides are first aid trained and will support you throughout your journey. You will also be accompanied by a team of support staff including cooks and camel handlers, and a Different Travel Company UK tour manager.

How tough is it?

The trek is rated moderately challenging for someone of a good fitness level. The terrain is a mixture of hard, flat sundried plains, dried up ancient riverbeds, wide sandy dune fields and hard rocky outcrops. Temperatures pose a specific challenge with temperatures historically reaching 35°C. You must be of a good fitness level before departure, to ensure fast recovery each day.

What is the climate like?

Temperatures average at 26°C during the day and drop to around 2°C at night, however you must be prepared for variations to this which are out of our control. Weather during the trek will be dry but there may be some strong winds. Rain, although very rare, is not impossible. Please note: the temperatures and conditions above are historically accurate but climate change can impact the seasons so you may experience uncharacteristic conditions during the trip which are out of our control. The guides will assess the situation and make decisions to ensure the best enjoyment and safety of the group.

How do we get to the desert?

To get to and from the desert requires long drives along winding mountain roads which offer stunning views of the snow-capped peaks and lush valleys. We will split the journey by spending some time trekking in the Imlil Valley and spending the night at Ouazazate before following the ancient caravan routes on to the Sahara. If you suffer from motion sickness you are advised to bring your usual anti-nausea medication with you. Regular stops are taken.

What is the camping like?

During the trek you will sleep in tents (two to a tent), or if the weather is good you can sleep outside under the stars; highly recommended! Foam sleeping mats are provided but you will need to bring a sleeping bag. Toilet facilities consist of a small toilet 'tent' covering a hole in the ground. There are no showers or bathing facilities in the desert so you must bring a pack of baby wipes.

What is the food like?

During the trek meals are cooked by a chef who will prepare Moroccan dishes. Breakfast and lunch will be eaten alfresco, and evening meals will be in a mess tent at camp. Plates, mugs, cutlery and other equipment are provided. While staying in Marrakech and Imlil meals will be at the hotel or at local restaurants.



Practical information

Who can take part?

The minimum age is 18. It may be possible to participate if you are 16 or 17 years old but you must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. There is no upper age limit. The ideal candidate would be fit, healthy and determined, open to adventure and adaptable to unexpected changes.

Medical Declaration

We require a medical form to be completed by everyone upon registering, and any pre-existing conditions, medications used and other medical issues must be specified. All your medical details are treated in the strictest confidence.

The information will be securely screened by a qualified medical professional, and details provided to your tour manager and local guides so our staff are adequately informed and prepared to support you during the trip. By completing this booking form you are giving consent for us to contact you confidentially with any follow up questions regarding your health.

If you declare any medical conditions you may be asked to provide more information, or we may request to contact your GP. In the event that your medical issues at the time of booking represent a concern for your safety and wellbeing, or the safety and wellbeing of others in the group, you may be recommended not to take part. If this happens your booking will not be confirmed and the deposit will be refunded.

We must be informed if any conditions or medication change, or if new conditions develop. If necessary confirmation of fitness to travel from your GP or specialist may be required.

Please note that we will never unreasonably deny participation on a trip nor contravene the Equality Act 2010.

Covid-19

Your health and safety is our top priority so rest assured that we are taking steps to ensure you not only have a memorable experience, but a safe one too.

We constantly monitor and follow the advice of the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) who provide recommendations and advice to British travellers about travel to a certain destination.

Health and safety is our top priority so we will **NEVER** operate a trip in an area where there is clear and present risk to our team members, whether that is due to a health outbreak, political instability, natural disasters or anything else.

We are optimistic that this trip will operate as scheduled, however if travel restrictions either in the UK or Morocco prevent safe travel we will look to either postpone or cancel your trip at no cost to you.

We will be reviewing each trip eight weeks before departure, and if, at that stage Morocco is either on the UK Government's 'red' list or the country is not allowing UK citizens to enter without quarantine, then we will look to either postpone or cancel the trip.

Please note that at the time of travel there may be enhanced safety and security measures in airports, bag drop may take longer, and you may need to provide a certificate of health or proof of vaccination.

We are closely monitoring the situation and will inform you about any information pertinent to your travel arrangements.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us on info@different-travel.com.



Trip cost

A **£325 registration fee** is payable at the time of booking and then, with the support of the events team, you are asked to **fundraise £2,600 for Prospect Hospice**.

A total of at least £2,128 (80%) must be raised by 23 December 2022 with the remaining £532 (20%) due by 3 February 2023.

What is included?

- ✓ Return flights from London* (inc. current taxes and fuel surcharges),
- ✓ Transfers and transport in Morocco
- ✓ Accommodation in hotels (3 nights) and guesthouse (1 night)
- ✓ Tents and sleeping mats on trek (3 nights)
- ✓ All meals as specified
- ✓ Local guides, camels and camel handlers on trek
- ✓ Different Travel UK tour manager

What is excluded?

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Tips (£25-30pp)
- ✗ Personal expenses (e.g. drinks, souvenirs etc.)
- ✗ Vaccinations

Is the trip ATOL protected?

Prospect House is acting as agent for The Different Travel Company, ATOL 6706. The flight-inclusive trip in this brochure is financially protected by the ATOL scheme. When you pay your registration fee you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate and ATOL Confirmation Invoice. Please ask for it and check to ensure that everything you booked (flights, hotels and other services) is listed on it. Please see our booking conditions for further information or for more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: www.caa.co.uk.

*Flights from regional airports may be possible. Details will be confirmed approximately 6 months prior to departure.



Itinerary

Day 1 (Sunday 19 March 2023):

London* to Imlil

We fly together to Marrakech where we are met by our guide before transferring to the mountain town of Imlil. Depending on flight times there may be time for a short walk this afternoon before a welcome dinner this evening.

Meals: Dinner

Overnight: Guesthouse

Day 2 (Monday 20 March 2023):

Imlil to Ouarzazate

After a hearty breakfast we begin our trek by heading into the Imlil Valley, passing through small villages and farms with views of the mountains soaring above us. After lunch we will cross the High Atlas Mountains to our overnight stop in Ouarzazate (journey time approximately 5 hours).

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Overnight: Hotel

Day 3 (Tuesday 21 March 2023):

Ouarzazate to Sahara

Today we follow ancient caravan routes into the Sahara, (journey time approx. 4 hours). This afternoon we will arrive in the desert and be welcomed by the rest of the trek team and the camels before commencing our trek, stopping overnight to camp under the stars of the Sahara.

Approx. trek distance: 5km

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Overnight: Camping

Days 4-5 (Wednesday 22 – Thursday 23 March 2023): Sahara Desert

Our trek continues through the desert as we traverse sand dunes and rocky, lunar landscapes for the next two days. We are aided by our local Berber team comprising of the guides, cook and camel owners (the camels are our porters, carrying our luggage and equipment). Each day you enjoy the varied Saharan landscape and learn about how important it is to respect and comply with the forces of nature in the desert. On average we will cover 15-20km per day but this will vary. As the trek progresses we learn how the nomadic people of the Sahara live: from cooking to sleeping out under the stars and reading the magnificent Saharan night sky.

Approx. trek distance: 15-20km

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Overnight: Camping

Day 6 (Friday 24 March 2023):

Sahara to Marrakech

This morning it's the final leg of the trek to a small village where we bid farewell to the trek team and head back to Marrakech (approx. 9 hours' drive).

Approx. trek distance: 5km

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Overnight: Hotel

Day 7 (Saturday 25 March 2023):

Marrakech

Today is a free day to explore the exotic city of Marrakech. Have a wander around the souks or enjoy the spectacle of the frenetic atmosphere of Jemaa el-Fna square.

Meals: Breakfast and dinner

Overnight: Hotel

Day 8 (Sunday 26 March 2023):

Marrakech to London*

Depending on flight times, have some free time to explore Marrakech before your flight back to London*.

Meals: Breakfast

N.B. This itinerary may change due to unusual weather, the ability of the group and so on. We will do our best to keep to the itinerary but we cannot be held responsible for changes that occur outside of our control. In all circumstances your guide and tour leader will have the final say in the interest of the group's health and safety.

*Flights from regional airports may be possible. Details will be confirmed approximately 6 months prior to departure.

Kit list

Essentials

- Passport + copy
- E-tickets
- ATM and credit card(s)
- Cash (£ Sterling)
- Travel insurance documents
- Pen for immigration forms
- LED head torch + spare batteries
- Sunglasses (preferably polarized)
- Adaptor (European 2 round pin)
- Camera + spare batteries
- Mobile phone + charger

Clothing and Footwear

- Hiking boots*
- Trainers/flip flops for camp
- Casual shoes for Marrakech
- Lightweight trek trousers
- Trek socks
- Underwear
- Non-cotton t-shirts
- Non-cotton long sleeved top/shirt
- Warm fleece or sweater
- Sun hat with brim
- Warm hat for night
- Gaiters (for the sand)
- Buff (www.buffwear.co.uk)
- Neck cooling 'Cobber'
- Casual clothing for Marrakech
- Swimwear for hotel

Hygiene

- Shampoo and conditioner*
- Toothbrush and toothpaste*
- Antiperspirant deodorant*
- Shower gel / loofah / shave kit*
- Wet wipes*
- Toilet paper*
- Hand sanitizer
- Sun block (high SPF)*
- Hairbrush/comb
- Feminine care products*
- Nappy bags (for used loo paper)*

First Aid Kit

- Prescription medicine
- Insect repellent (50% DEET)
- Ibuprofen
- Paracetamol
- Plasters
- Blister plasters (e.g. Compeed)
- Imodium (Loperamide)
- Rehydration salts (Dioralyte)
- Antiseptic cream (e.g. Savlon)
- Anti-histamine cream/tablets
- Lip balm with SPF protection
- Zinc oxide tape
- Nail scissors/ tweezers
- Muscle rub (e.g. Deep Heat)
- Spare glasses/contact lenses*

Optional

- Video camera + charger
- Umbrella (for the sun)
- MP3 player/iPod
- Packing organisers
- Hiking pole(s)
- Portable power bank
- Books/ pack of cards

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag (comfort 0°C)
- Sleeping bag liner (cotton/ silk)
- Ear plugs (essential)
- Pyjamas (use thermals on trek)

Luggage

- Suitcase/rucksack for luggage
- Daypack (25-30l)
- Trek kit bag (carried by camels)
- Combination padlocks

Eating and Drinking

- Energy snacks
- 2-litre bottle (e.g. CamelBak)
- plus 1-litre bottle **OR**
- 3x 1-litre water bottles
- Electrolyte tablets (e.g. NUUN)

PLEASE NOTE: This list is just a guideline and is not exhaustive. The items on this list do not take into account your personal preferences based on your previous trekking experience, or individual requirements. For information about items on this list please refer to the trip dossier or contact The Different Travel Company on info@different-travel.com

*Please ensure you pack your hiking boots into your hand baggage in the unlikely event your checked luggage goes missing or is delayed.

*Please consider eco-friendly or biodegradable options. Consider shopping at Little Footprint Gifts (<https://littlefootprintgifts.weebly.com/eco-traveller.html>).