

# African Desert and Mountain Trek

**Sat 29 September to Sat 6 October 2012**

**A journey through Morocco's desert valleys and up the Northern slopes of the High Atlas to the summit of Mt Mgoun (4,068m).**

You are asked to pay £175 Deposit and Raise £1,300 in sponsorship.





# Itinerary

## Day 1

After arriving at Marrakech airport, the team departs immediately to the Central High Atlas, a journey of 3-4 hours by minibus. From Marrakech we will head eastwards to Azilal and up to the Bougumez valley where we meet our local team of cook and muleteers. The overnight stay is at a Gite d'etappe run by the local inhabitants.

## Day 2

The trek begins. You journey through fields of wheat, corn or potatoes, past walnut and apple trees. You will see superb villages and hamlets with multi-storied houses – some rising up to 20 metres – and the colourful dress of the berber women and girls. You will also be able to enjoy the fascinating skyline of the surrounding High Atlas mountain ranges and rivers as you head through the valley to the 2,900m high pass Ait Imi, and descend to the bottom of the valley where strange eroded towers are to be seen.

## Day 3

The journey through the desert continues. Although partially sandy, the desert is also made up of rocky terrain. The team camps at Aflafal.

## Day 4

The superb landscape continues; eroded limestone pinnacles in red, grey, white and brown layers, old and gnarled cedar-tress, little hamlets of the nomads, tiny fields along the river, steep rock walls bounding the valley. We camp at the source of Mgoun river in the Oulilimt valley.

## Day 5

Ascension of the Mgoun/Arous gorge. You will follow the river bed and climb slowly to a pass. Part of the climb to the ridge is steep and leads through scree. It is not technically difficult, but a good level of fitness is necessary. The team descends to the foot of Mgoun mountain and continues to the upper entrance of the Arous gorge, then climbs to the summit of the mountain.

## Day 6

Walk to Camp Arous. Those who'd like an extra challenge can descend the narrow gorge of Arous by roping down at least once (about 15 metres). Here and there, some boulders obstruct the way, and your guide will find the best way to pass the various obstacles and barriers. Altogether an unforgettable descent! Those preferring to walk will be led by a separate guide and both parties will meet at the end of the gorge and proceed to Camp Arous.

## Day 7

For the last part of your trek, you will follow the trail through the Arous valley, past small villages, reaching the Bougumez valley around lunchtime. The team then returns to Marrakech for the overnight stay in a hotel.

## Day 8

Transfer from your hotel to the airport.

*Many factors can lead to the itinerary being changed at the last minute. Recommendations are given on good faith and based on experience.*

The trek provides airport transfers, all transfers according to the itinerary, overnight stay in hotel including breakfast and shared double room, overnight stays in tents, full board outside Marrakech, French speaking experienced Moroccan guide, cook, muleteers, and mules for transporting luggage, cooking equipment, mattress covers, camping equipment, nomad (dining) tent and toilet tent.

# Costs

Participants are asked to pay a £175 non-refundable deposit and raise £1,300 in sponsorship for Parity for Disability. The deposit will be due upon signing the application form. A further £650 will be due Friday 29 June 2012, with the remaining £650 due after the trek is completed.

You may choose to fundraise for the whole amount, or self-fund part (or all) of it.

The costs described cover:

- Return flight to Marrakech
- Airport transfers and all transfers according to the itinerary.
- Overnight stay in hotel including breakfast and shared double room..
- Participation in the trek as per the itinerary, inclusive of full board, French-speaking experienced Moroccan guide, cook, muleteers (mules are used for transporting luggage). Also included are cooking equipment and covers, camping equipment, individual tents for two persons and foam mattresses, nomad tent and toilet tent.
- The total amount Parity for Disability wishes its trekkers to additionally raise for the charity.

Additional costs to each trekker: purchasing or hiring any clothing and equipment needed, and purchasing travel insurance. Also not included in the costs are drinks in restaurants and hotels, tips for the local team, and any room/tent supplements.

## About Ross Ashe-Cregan

The trek is organised and will be overseen by adventure specialist Ross Ashe-Cregan (pictured right), a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society who has many years expedition experience. Ross has successfully climbed North Africa's highest peak, Toubkal, in both summer and winter, and led parties trekking in both the Atlas and Anti-Atlas Ranges. He has also carried out several sponsored abseils for Parity which have brought in thousands of pounds for the charity.

To ensure a successful trip, Ross will employ one of the top guiding agencies in the Atlas Mountain region, an agency that he has used for his past trips.

Ross's contact details:

Namaste, Morfa Crescent  
Tywyn, Gwynedd LL36 9AU  
E-mail: [ross@cadairexperience.co.uk](mailto:ross@cadairexperience.co.uk)  
Tel: 01654 711 389  
Website: [www.cadairexperience.co.uk](http://www.cadairexperience.co.uk)





## About Parity for Disability

Parity for Disability is a local charity providing vital services, information and support for children and adults with multiple disabilities, their families and carers throughout Hampshire, Berkshire and Surrey.

We believe everyone with multiple disabilities should have the opportunity to reach their potential and be included in their community.

Parity runs two day centres in Farnborough and Camberley, Easter and summer teenagers' activity schemes, and a music therapy service that operates both on-site and in homes, schools and other locations throughout the area. Parity's pioneering services provide one-to-one support by trained staff. They assess each individual's needs, and provide a stimulating environment in which they can develop and achieve.

The funds raised from your trek will go directly towards maintaining the day-to-day running of Parity's services. We must raise £120,000 each year to keep going and we do this by requesting donations from foundations, trusts and companies, and through community events such as the Atlas Mountain trek.

More information about Parity for Disability is available at [www.parityfordisability.org.uk](http://www.parityfordisability.org.uk).

**For more information about Parity or this trek, please contact:**

**Helene Abbiss  
Parity for Disability  
94 Whetstone Road, Cove  
Farnborough, Hants GU14 9SX  
Tel: 01252 375581  
Email: [helene@parityfordisability.org.uk](mailto:helene@parityfordisability.org.uk)**

# Preparing for Your Trek

## IMPORTANT

### Please send to Parity for Disability:

- Medical form (included in this pack)
- Insurance declaration form (included in this pack)
- Photocopy of details page of your passport
- 1 x passport photos

## TO DO

- Check the name on your passport and ensure that you have given the exact same first and surname to Parity, as your plane ticket must match your passport.
- Plan your fitness training
- Obtain needed vaccinations
- Obtain any medical items needed and any doctor's prescriptions ahead of time.
- Dental check-up 1-2 months before departure
- Obtain insurance
- Equipment list – decide which items you may need to buy/hire.

*It is essential that you ensure you are comfortable walking all day in your boots in a mountain environment well in advance of departure.*

# Health Issues

## **Fitness – Train For Your Trip**

This is not a simple walk in the park. You can get in shape, but it's important to do enough walking in preparation. You will need to be comfortable trekking for five or six hours a day in mountainous terrain. The best way is to get out on the British hills and spend time climbing. Regular cardiovascular exercise on the stepper in the gym is an alternative but you should still try to get some time in mountain terrain as gyms cannot simulate the rough ground found in a mountain environment.

Ross Ashe-Cregan will offer a 'Weekend in Wales' before your trip which will allow trekkers to spend a significant amount of time in the heights of the Welsh mountains and also get acquainted with 'bunkhouse' style accommodation which you will encounter in Morocco. Once Parity has recruited the trek team we will arrange the timing of the weekend to suit as many as possible. There will be an additional cost for the weekend.

## **Medical Form**

Please complete and sign the enclosed form. You will need a doctor to sign the form and declare your suitability for the trek if you are over 65 or have a pre-existing medical condition.

## **Vaccinations**

You should consult with your GP who will assess your particular health risks. The NHS Fit for Travel web site states that travellers to Morocco will usually be advised to obtain Tetanus, Typhoid and Hepatitis A vaccinations. Visit [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk) for more details.

## **Dental check-up**

You should have a dental check-up 1-2 months before departure to allow enough time for any work that needs to be done on your teeth. Altitude and flying will highlight dental problems, so ensure you have a check-up in order to avoid any pain on your trek.

## **Staying Healthy While in Morocco**

You must be scrupulous about hygiene. Wash your hands before eating anything, and use antibacterial hand gel in addition to soap and water. Remember that money is one of the dirtiest things you will touch. You should not drink the tap water - bottled water is available everywhere. Be careful what you eat. The food and drink our cooks prepare will be safe, but when eating elsewhere avoid uncooked food, or things that might not have been washed in safe water, i.e. avoid ice cream, ice cubes, salads and fruit if you're not sure how it was washed or prepared. Hot drinks are safe, as the water has been boiled. If in doubt, ask for advice.

## **Medicines**

A comprehensive first aid kit is carried on our trek, and there will be a first aider available, but you should make sure that YOU carry any medication that you cannot live without. It is very important that you tell your trek leader of any medication that you take, and also of any medical conditions, even if you have already told us about them on your medical form. You should also pack your own personal first aid kit with any everyday items you're accustomed to using, eg plasters, aspirin, paracetamol.

## **Stomach Upsets**

In the event of you having an upset stomach, we recommend that you do not block up your system with immodium-type medicines, but that you limit your food intake, and keep to a low-fat diet. Drink lots of water, and rehydration salts such as Dioralyte can help. If the problem is severe, antibiotics may offer an effective solution.

## **Trekking at Altitude**

The itinerary is planned to give time for acclimatisation. Do not walk too fast. If you can't talk while you're walking, you are walking too fast. Above 3,000m, almost all Westerners will find it harder to breathe, and walking uphill needs to be done at a slower pace than at sea level.

Persistent headaches, nausea, breathlessness, dizziness, loss of appetite and difficulty sleeping are not unusual, but you should report any of these symptoms to your guide so that they can help prevent them turning into anything serious. If ignored, these symptoms can worsen, and lead to potentially fatal pulmonary or cerebral oedema.

Descent cures altitude sickness. Diamox is a prescription drug available through your GP which won't mask the symptoms of an oedema, but can help treat altitude related problems. In cases where the onset of an oedema is suspected, diamox must never be used instead of descent.

# Paperwork

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have adequate insurance for your trip. Your insurance must cover you for the entire period of travel, and for the activities and the altitude that you are going to, and also for helicopter rescue and repatriation. You should also notify the insurance company of all pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that many insurance companies do not cover these requirements. There are a few insurance companies that specialise in insurance policies suitable for trekking expeditions. If your current travel insurance company cannot provide you with a suitable policy, please contact us for further information. We recommend that you also have insurance for cancellation and personal baggage.

In all cases, extra costs incurred by a client as a result of premature departure from the expedition, eg, rescue, food and accommodation costs of themselves and support staff etc. are the responsibility of the client. It is important that all clients carry with them the financial means to meet these costs at the time of them being incurred.

Once you have arranged your insurance, please complete the enclosed insurance declaration form, and return it to Parity.

## Passport

Check that your passport will have at least 6 months of validity at the time of travelling. Send a copy of the details page of your passport to Parity. You may also like to travel with an extra copy of this page in case you lose your passport.

## Visa

A visa is not required for the following nationals: British, Australian, Canadian, USA or EU members, for stays of up to 3 months.

However, visitors should ensure their passports are stamped when they enter Morocco.

Nationals not referred to above are advised to contact the Moroccan Embassy to check visa requirements.

Moroccan Embassy in London: 49 Queens Gate Garden London SW7 5NE Tel: 0207 581 5001/4 Fax: 0207 225 3862	Moroccan Visa Section: Diamond House 97/99 Praed Street London W2 Tel: 0207 724 0719
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Street maps showing the locations above are available on the Moroccan Embassy homepage at <http://morocco.embassyhomepage.com>

## Money

Currency: Euros are accepted. The Moroccan Dirham is the official currency of Morocco. 1 Dirham = 100 centimes. Notes are in denominations of MAD200, 100, 50, 20 and 10. Coins are in denominations of MAD5, 2 and 1 and 50, 20, 10 and 5 centimes. The current exchange rate can be found online.

Moroccan Dirhams are available from some outlets in the UK and can also be obtained in Morocco. It is much easier to exchange cash than traveller's cheques. Foreign currencies and traveler's cheques can be exchanged at official bureaux de change only (identified by a golden sign); changing money in the street is illegal. There is no commission charge and visitors will be issued with a receipt which they must keep in order to exchange Moroccan currency back into the original national currency upon departure.

Credit & Debit Cards: MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in Morocco. ATMs are widely available.

How much spending money: This is up to you; you will not need too much cash on trek, as your meals are all already paid for. However it is customary to "tip" our trek crew, for this and small incidentals you will probably need approx £50 each.

A beer in Marrakech can cost £4. For those who like "retail" therapy Marrakech is a paradise, and considerably cheaper than the UK. Be prepared to "haggle", and bring about £100 spending money if you do plan to go shopping.

Tipping: Tipping of guides in the agency will take place at the end of the trek. As requirements change from time to time, an up-to-date guide to the current requirements for tipping can be obtained from the agent on arrival.

Alms to children: Ross Ashe-Cregan does not encourage this. However, there is a school nearby one of the places we will be staying, if you would like to bring pens or school notebooks to donate.

Departure Taxes: There is no departure tax upon leaving.

# The Experience

Morocco is considered the most moderate democratic Islamic country, with hospitable people interested in the outside world. The larger cities like Marrakech have shops that sell clothing, electronics and jewellery etc., much of it imported from Europe. There are also shopping centres that sell brand-name food, pharmaceuticals and household goods. Local merchants sell daily essentials such as mineral water (eau mineral), toilet paper, shampoo, chocolate etc.

Upon arrival in Marrakesh, politely decline all offers of help to carry luggage, or to take you to hotels etc from anyone. A simple 'no thank you' and walking on is recommended.

Your visit will include a short, guided tour of a souk, a market consisting of hundreds of tiny shops where you can find almost anything. There is a huge variety of quality craftsmanship and you may wish to haggle for a bargain.

Please note that it is considered inappropriate to offer money (or anything else to anyone) with your **left hand**.

If you choose to go out in Marrakech separately from the group in the evening, Ross will provide you with an emergency calling card to ensure you return safely.

The weather generally is fine during the time of year you will be visiting. It will be comfortably warm during the day for trekking, and a light jacket will probably be needed for early evening.

There is some camping - two persons per tent - on this trip. The accommodation in simple French-style lodges called gites will be separated into male/female, providing bunk-style beds with mattresses. The gites have individual showers with lockable doors.

A typical trekking day: The group rises at about 7-7.30am and breakfasts on a choice of porridge, cereal, or bread with honey/jam. The group starts off 9-9.30am. Lunch consists of salads, including cheese and fish. Sometimes lunch will be provided on trek, other times there will be a late lunch upon arrival and then a walk in the surrounding area. For dinner, a delicious tagine (meat cooked with vegetables, similar to a stew) is served, and lots of fruit will be available. The group eats together in the evening and there will be spare time for everyone to relax. People may find they need to go to sleep quite early!

On the trail itself we will pass many places where people can buy bars of chocolate.

Mobile phones and internet: There is good reception for mobile phones. Internet is available in Marrakech.

Electricity: You will need the European Continental-style two-pin plug adaptor.

Responsible Tourism: Please do not leave rubbish anywhere. Wherever possible, please take out what you bring in.

# Clothing & Equipment List

Please remember that weight is now an issue when flying short haul flights. As much as possible should be carried as hand baggage in a small rucksack that will also be used as a day sack when trekking.

In cities such as Marrakech, Moroccan men and women often dress as they would on the streets of London or New York. However, outside the city and especially in the rural villages, we recommend that you follow the local tradition where both men and women cover themselves from the knee (shorts or skirt) to the elbow (short-sleeved T-shirts).

## Clothing

- Boots: Gore-Tex fabric, well worn-in – wear on flight to Morocco
- Trainers or sandals: for camp wear, cheap ones can be bought in Marrakech
- Socks: two pairs - smart wool or similar
- Lightweight trekking trousers - not too tight
- Warm trousers for evening/standing around wear
- Thermal shirt /top
- Warm fleece or Duvet type of top for evenings or stops
- Waterproof jacket and trousers – must be breathable, Gore-Tex or similar
- Woollen hat and gloves.

## Equipment

Rucksack or Holdall	50 litre type that will be carried by mules
Water-resistant bags	
A day rucksack	To carry personal items on trek
Rucksack liner, bin liner	To keep things dry
Sleeping bag	3 seasons- synthetic is best
Sleeping mat	Foam cell or self inflating type-full length is best
Sunglasses	Must be protective enough
Sun screen	Must be the correct factor for your skin
Sun hat	Wide brim/ peak/neck –for protection
Water bottle/camel pack	Personal choice but at least 1 litre size
Sterilisation tablets	Bottle mineral water is available, so be prepared.
½ pint plastic cup	This will be your own on trek – mark with name
Washing bag	Packed with your personal wash items
Towels	1x large for trek bag, 1 x travel towel for carrying
Anti-bacterial hand wash	Small bottle for hygienic use
All purpose soap	For washing clothes etc
Personal First Aid kit	For basic first aid: plasters, blister kit, bandage

## Comforts

Cameras	With a supply of batteries
Binoculars	Small and lightweight preferable
MP3 or Ipod	
Card game/ travel quiz/ frisbee	Entertainment for the evenings
Small umbrella	For shelter from sun or rain

# Parity for Disability Trek Medical Form

This trek demands a fairly high degree of physical fitness and health.

Please fill in this form carefully. We will treat all information in the strictest confidence and send it to Ross Ashe-Cregan who is responsible for your safety and welfare during your trek with us. Once your trek is complete and you have returned to your destination and safety and there is no further need for the information on this form, it will be destroyed.

If you have a history of any of the following medical conditions, please give details such as frequency, severity and aggravating factors where necessary. If you have had an operation within the last year, whether minor or not, we need to know the details of the operation and the outcomes and possible long-term problems, particularly ones that may occur or be accentuated if strenuous and physically demanding exercise is taken.

It is the responsibility of each trekker to ensure that he/she is adequately insured for the trek, including activities undertaken, and the altitude. Helicopter rescue and repatriation must be a part of the insurance policy. Pre-existing medical conditions must be declared to the insurance company.

<b>Title and Full Name as it is shown on your passport (please print in CAPITALS)</b>		
<b>Trek:</b>		
<b>Date of trek:</b>		<b>Height:</b>
<b>Date of birth:</b>		<b>Weight:</b>
<b>Condition</b>	Yes/No	Details (if insufficient room for details, please write on reverse of this sheet)
<b>High blood pressure</b>		
<b>Heart/circulatory disorders</b>		
<b>Chest/lung disease</b>		
<b>Asthma/hay fever</b>		
<b>Epilepsy/diabetes</b>		
<b>Digestive/bowel disorders</b>		
<b>Joint/back injuries</b>		
<b>Knee/hip/ankle</b>		
<b>Surgical operations</b>		
<b>Mental/emotional problems</b>		
<b>Pregnancy (at time of trek)</b>		
<b>Allergies</b>		
<b>Any current medical conditions</b>		

We recommend an ECG for participants over the age of 65 at your doctor's discretion

I understand that I will be undertaking a challenge which requires a good level of fitness and I believe that I am fit enough to complete the challenge and take responsibility for myself under these conditions.

I declare that the above information is a true and fair representation of my current state of health. Should my circumstances change, I will inform Parity at the earliest opportunity.

Signature ..... Date.....

If you are over 65 or have a pre-existing medical condition, please ask your doctor to sign below to confirm that you are fit enough to undertake the challenge:

Signature of Doctor..... Date.....



# Parity for Disability Trek Insurance Form

It is a condition of booking that you have adequate insurance for your trip. Your insurance must cover you for:

- The entire period of travel
- The activities and altitude you are going to
- Helicopter rescue and repatriation
- You should also notify the insurance company of all pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that many insurance companies do not cover these requirements. There are a few insurance companies that specialise in insurance policies suitable for trekking expeditions. If your current travel insurance company cannot provide you with a suitable policy, please contact us for further information. We recommend that you also have insurance for cancellation and personal baggage. Once you have arranged your insurance, please complete this insurance declaration form, and return it to us as soon as possible.

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Trip Title:</b>	
<b>Trip code or group name:</b>	
<b>Land-only dates:</b>	
<b>Insurance company:</b>	
<b>Insurance policy number:</b>	
<b>Insurance company general telephone number:</b>	
<b>Insurance company emergency international assistance telephone number:</b>	
I understand that responsibility for the payment of all bills incurred for rescue and repatriation lies ultimately with me, the client, in the event of the insurance company not paying for them. I am responsible for ensuring that these payments can be met as outlined in the Booking Conditions.	
Signature	
Date	

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