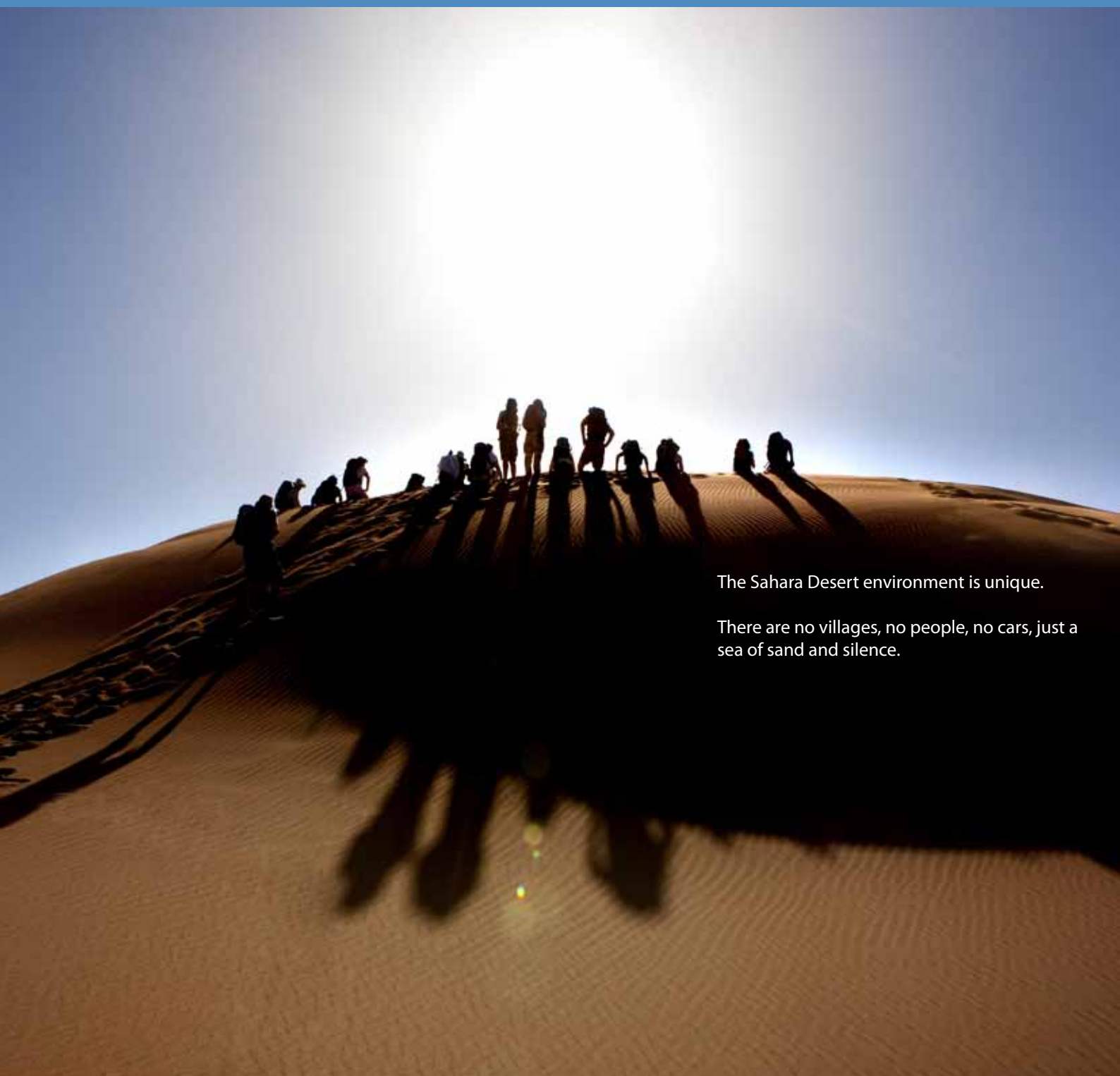


# Sahara Desert Trek Information and itinerary



The Sahara Desert environment is unique.

There are no villages, no people, no cars, just a sea of sand and silence.

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// Superb trekking holiday....sleeping out under the stars in the Sahara Desert will be with me forever. //

Karyn, Nurse, Scotland



## Introduction

Trekking in the Sahara Desert is a very unique experience; something you would perhaps do only once.

This is a land of silence; no people, no radio, no television and cloudless skies. To sleep out under the fantastic array of stars at night is wonderful.

This 10 day itinerary includes two nights in the ancient city of Marrakesh, two nights in Ouarzazate, a wonderful drive to and from the desert and a trek of some quality in a very different and unique environment.

You will be met at the airport and transferred to your traditional Moroccan Riad (hotel), just minutes from the famous Djemaa el Fna square. It is here that the entertainers perform and it also the location of the Medina (myriad of souks (markets)).

On Day 2, your drive down to the Desert begins. You will drive over High Atlas mountains and down to your overnight stop - Ouarzazate. This small town is the gateway to the desert and home to many famous films (most notably 'The Gladiator').

Another half day drive through the Draa Valley and you will reach the end of the road, literally! M'Hamid is a desert town and where you will meet your support team, complete with camels and handlers and your trek begins.

This trek consists of two half days and 4 full days. The initial day and a half will be on low level dunes before taking on the much larger dunes the deeper you get. The terrain is not all soft sand; some hard baked surfaces (mainly river beds) and even rocks are never too far away.

With no ambient light and the desert to absorb all sound, the evenings and nights are just so dark and quiet. It is quite eerie even just to sit on a small dune overlooking the campsite and just look and listen. The stars are so bright and it is very easy to spot the orbiting satellites as they speed across the skies above you. It is highly likely that you will be able to sleep out under the stars with no tent above you; try it, it is brilliant.

This is a camping trek so all of your kit will be transported on camels; all you need to carry is your daysack containing items such as your camera, water, sunscreen, etc...If you are a keen photographer, protect it well. Sand and cameras do not mix well!

The food supplied and prepared for you is superb even without considering where you are. It is very well presented and served to you in true Moroccan style; in a Bedouin tent sat on the floor cushions. They even bake bread in the sand to keep the supplies up!

### Marrakech

Marrakech is a city to whet your appetite; one that conjures up a picture of an ancient walled city within which traders ply their goods and find entertainment – it is still true today.

The Djemaa el Fna square is lively all day but really comes alive after dusk with the bright burning lamps of the food stalls, the story tellers, the musicians all entertaining the tourists and locals alike.

The Medina is also on your doorstep; it is a myriad of narrow lanes that lead to many Souks (markets) selling local crafts such as clothing, carpets, leather goods, wooden crafts and specialist foods including spices. The fresh juices are wonderful as are the variety of nuts, dates and olives.

Maybe you should also try a 'Hamмам'. Similar to a Turkish bath, this is the traditional method of bathing. Once softened up by the ambient steam heat, the host goes to work on scrubbing your body quite vigorously removing any deep dirt (great after a trek!). The more up-market Hammam's are sort of Spa's where a massage is also included.

Be aware that most restaurants in and around the main square do not sell alcohol. Morocco is a Muslim country. Go back a street or two and establishments selling alcohol can be found.

### Details

Duration:  
10 days UK - UK

Min/Max pers: 2/12

Accommodation on trek:  
Camping

Dates: See website

Cost:  
£495 (2011)  
£550 (2012)

Our trips formally begin and end in Marrakesh

### When to go

In general terms:

Nov - Mar

Outside of those months, it is considered too hot to trek for you and the support crew.

Travel and Trek is a truly independent company specializing in adventure trekking and touring. We pride ourselves on the personal touch and whether you are travelling solo or in a big group, we can adjust itineraries to suit you.

## Important information

### Costs

Costs are based on 2 people sharing and are per person (singles see below)

### Fully Bonded

Your money is safe. We are protected by Insurance Passenger Protection (IPP), which protects YOU against OUR insolvency.



### Trek Dossier

On booking, you will receive a comprehensive Trek Dossier, which includes:

- Clothing and equipment list
- Medical notes (including vaccination requirements)
- What to do on arrival in Marrakesh
- Food, money and more...

### Airport arrivals

We pick you up on arrival and transfer you back on departure.

### Passports

Passports should be valid for a minimum period of 6 months on the date on entry into Nepal.

### Tourist Visa

A tourist visa is not required for UK Nationals.

### Itineraries

Day 1 of your itinerary is deemed to be your departure day from the UK.

### Hotel Accommodation

We use typical Moroccan Riads (hotels), which are of 3\* standard with very friendly staff to attend to your every need. Our costs are based on a B&B basis, twin share. All rooms are en suite. If you wish to use a higher grade hotel, then please ask us for details.

### Accommodation on Trek

2 man tents.

### Singles

Travel and Trek does not believe in penalising single travellers unnecessarily. If you are a single traveller and do not request sole occupancy of a room, you will be accommodated with another member of the group of the same sex. If there is an odd number travelling and you happen to be the odd one out then you will be allocated sole occupancy at no extra cost. If you do wish to request sole occupancy throughout all or part of the trip, then call us for advise.

### Extended Stays

You are free to extend your stay in Morocco with extra days before or after the trek. Travel and Trek can assist you with accommodation if you wish or you are free to make your own arrangements.

### Our Guides

Our personable Moroccan Guides are all qualified, licenced, English speaking Guides with a wealth of experience and knowledge.

### UK Leaders

Some treks have a UK Leader on them.

### Fitness

Walking in the Sahara is clearly not as physical as mountainous high altitude terrain but it does have its own challenges. Whilst all of the terrain is not soft sand, it is undulating and the heat will have an affect. A reasonable level of fitness based on the ability to walk at your own comfortable pace for 6 - 7 hrs a day (with rest stops), for several consecutive days carrying a day sack weighing approx 6—7 kg is all that is required.

**Desert Heat.** To trek in the Sahara in the summer months would simply be too hot. In the winter months, you can still expect daytime temperatures to reach around 30 Deg C but may drop close to freezing at night. A light frost on the tents overnight is not uncommon. The region they we trek in has over 320 cloudless days per year.

### Clothing and equipment

This information is provided on booking.

### Medical/Vaccinations

You are advised to consult your GP if you are in any doubt about your physical condition to undertake your chosen trek. Whilst we do provide information on vaccinations, you should also seek professional advice on what vaccinations you require for Morocco and other locations should you have an extended trip. For planning purposes you should need: Hep A, Typhoid, Tetanus, Polio and Meningitis.

### Local Payments

Travel and Trek does not charge any local payments.

### Travel Insurance

It is absolutely vital that you have adequate travel insurance. See page 7.

**Expert Help**

If you have any queries in the planning stage of your trip, call our experts on 01476 562763 or 07725 943108

**How To Book**

- Complete the booking form (downloadable from the website) and return it with a deposit of £150 pp.
- Booking forms can be completed electronically and returned as an attachment to an e-mail.
- Details of payment options are on the booking form.
- Balance payments are due 10 weeks prior to departure.

## Flights to Marrakesh

(researched Jul 2011)

Scheduled airlines:

- Royal Air Maroc (from Heathrow and Gatwick), Iberia (from Heathrow), BA (Gatwick) and BMI (Heathrow)

Low Cost Airlines (all direct)

- Ryanair fly from Bristol, East Midland (Nottingham), Edinburgh and Luton
- Thompson fly from Manchester and Gatwick
- Easyjet fly from Manchester and Gatwick

Excellent flight research websites:

[www.low-cost-airline-guide.com](http://www.low-cost-airline-guide.com)

[www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net)

[www.kayak.co.uk/flights](http://www.kayak.co.uk/flights)

## Trip inclusions and exclusions

**Inclusions**

- Return international airport transfers
- Riad (hotel) accommodation in Marrakesh and Ouarzazate, total 4 nights on a twin share, B&B basis
- Sleeping tents (2 person), dining tent, kitchen tent and toilet tents throughout the trek
- All food and mineral water on trek
- Camp chef and support crew
- Exclusive road transport to and from the trek
- Services of an English speaking Moroccan Guide from departure in Marrakesh to arrival back in Marrakesh
- Comprehensive Trip Dossier, Clothing and equipment list

**Exclusions**

- International flight
- Personal spending
- Staff gratuities, advice will be given
- Personal travel insurance

# Itinerary

## 1 Arrive Marrakesh

Our trips formally begin and end in Marrakesh.

You will be met at the airport and transferred to your traditional Moroccan Riad (hotel) inside the Medina.

Once you have settled in, you will want to experience the famous Djemaa el Fna square. Your first experience of the square is one of a senses explosion; entertainers performing, a myriad of food stalls all lit up with the smells to accompany them, and the general melee of activity.

With no ambient light and the desert to absorb all sound, the evenings and nights are just so dark and quiet. It is quite eerie even just to sit on a small dune overlooking the campsite and just look and listen. The stars are so bright and it is very easy to spot the orbiting satellites as they speed across the skies above you.

Once you begin trekking, it will not be long before you wonder how your Guide is navigating; it all looks so similar with no landmarks to speak of. Until that is, you meet Eric. Eric is a 300m high sand dune and you will sit on top of it (eventually!) at least once.

## 2 Depart for Ouarzazate

After breakfast, your drive down to the Desert begins.

You will drive over High Atlas mountains and down to your overnight stop - Ouarzazate. This is a 5hr journey through some stunning mountain scenery.

Your hotel is a typical Moroccan Oasis. Enjoy a tagine and perhaps a glass of wine before you reach the miles of glorious sand that await you the following day.

Total journey time 5 – 6 hrs, lunch en route.

## 8 Final trek day, overnight Ouarzazate

This will be a short trek to meet your transport, maybe into M'Hamid itself.

You say goodbye to your support crew and head back to Ouarzazate. Once in the hotel, you can relax and have that well earned shower!

## 3 Drive to M'Hamid, begin trekking

This 5hr drive takes you through the beautiful Draa Valley.

After a picnic lunch, you will eventually reach the end of the road, literally! M'Hamid is a Desert town and where you will meet your support team, complete with camels and handlers and your trek begins. The first section is fairly short to introduce you to the terrain and also allow you to set up your tents for the first time.

## 9 Drive to Marrakesh, overnight Marrakesh

After breakfast, it's back towards Marrakesh.

We get you back as soon as we can leaving you plenty of time to get out into the Medina and experience the multitude of Souks. The bartering and market activity is something special.

In the evening, enjoy a traditional meal in any one of many restaurants or try your chance by eating on one of the street stalls.

## 4 - 7 Desert Trekking

For the next 4 full days, you will trek further into the desert, experiencing what life there is (and there is more than you think) and the tranquillity that it can bring. Life is simple here.

## 10 Depart to UK

You will be transferred back to the airport for your flight to UK at the appropriate time.

# Travel Insurance

It is absolutely essential that you have adequate travel insurance. Be truthful to your insurance company about precisely what activities you are undertaking and to what altitude (max). Failure to do that may invalidate your policy.

To fly a patient back to the UK under any form of medical supervision (ie on a stretcher) is estimated to cost well into £000's.

In terms of activities for insurance purposes, you are trekking. There is no climbing involved.

This Foreign & Commonwealth Office link is a useful reference and recommended read:  
<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/staying-safe/travel-insurance/>

## So What Happens If I Have An Accident?

If you have an accident that requires professional medical help, the first priority is to get you to the nearest medical station (provided that you can be moved). Your Guide and his staff will do this as quickly as possible.

The Guide will have a mobile phone and will know where to obtain a signal and who to call. Vehicular access may be possible otherwise it may be on a camel!

All in cases, the fastest and most appropriate method will be used; common sense must always prevail.

Any serious injury that requires a helicopter will require the immediate involvement of your travel insurance company. They will be contacted and informed of the situation if you are unable to do so yourself. The insurance company should do the rest.

## A Little Preparation May Save Your Life

Some insurance companies provide a very handy credit card sized card with all of their contact details on it. If your company does not, then try using this very handy website [Ucardit.co.uk](http://Ucardit.co.uk). Travel and Trek clients get a 10% discount.

For about £5 (including P&P), you get a virtually indestructible credit card sized card with all of your important information on it. You can either use one of three pre-designed Travel and Trek cards or design your own. An example is shown below. You can literally put whatever you want on it from flight details, mobile numbers, addresses, insurance details, etc...

To try it, go to the Home page, click 'Travel'. Then scroll down, bottom left, click on the 'Travel and Trek' banner and either use a branded template or design your own. These are example cards from the website (not full size).

