

# Walking in the Atlas Mountains

**Tour Style:** Worldwide walking holidays

**Destination:** Morocco

**Trip code:** MRWHW-7

**Trip Walking Grade:** 3



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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From the spine-tingling buzz of Marrakech's maze-like medina to the heart-stirring serenity of the peaks and valleys in the Atlas Mountains, you'll walk amongst some of Morocco's most captivating scenery. A land of Berber villages, fruit-rich orchards, dizzying orange-hued gorges, and impossibly green valleys awaits as we set off on a potpourri of walks from our base in the heart of the mountains.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- Return flights from London Gatwick or Heathrow including baggage and transfers (flights available from other airports - price may vary)
- Guided walks with local leaders
- HF Holidays Tour Manager
- 7 nights' touring accommodation across Morocco
- 7 breakfasts, 7 lunches & 7 dinners
- An evening of traditional Berber entertainment
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)

## HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

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- Soaking up the sights of Jemaa el-Fnna square
- Discovering Aït Bouguemez valley, known as the happy valley
- Walking in the heart of the Atlas Mountains
- Marvelling at the mix of scenery, from the Ouzoud Falls to M'Goun mountain
- Visiting a women's cooperative where they make rugs and bottle honey

## ITINERARY

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### Day 1: Arrival Day

Arrive in Marrakech and transfer to your riad/hotel for the night. Explore Jemaa El-Fna square in the evening followed by dinner.

### Day 2: High Atlas Mountains

Our first full day in Morocco begins with a drive through the foothills of the High Atlas Mountains to the Berber town of Azilal where we'll have the chance to see Ouzoud Falls. We'll pass mountains, gorges, and mud brick Berber villages on our way to the heart of the High Atlas, including Aït Bouguemez, also known as happy valley. Then it's on to our accommodation in the village of Imelghas, which will be our base for the rest of our time in the mountains.

### Day 3: Berber Villages And Orchard Valleys

#### Option 1 - Tabant – Ibakallone

**Distance:** 5 miles (8km)

**Ascent:** 100ft (30m)

Walk through fields from Imelghas, following tracks that weave through apples orchards and criss-cross over irrigation ditches. Once we reach the main village of Bouguemez - Tabant, we'll stop for a coffee here before walking alongside the foothills of Adazene on mule tracks to Ibakliwn village. We'll return via Ait Imi where the Tizi n' Ait Imi pass walk starts.

#### Option 2 - Tabant - Ait Imi - Ibakalloun - Rbat

**Distance:** 8 miles (13km)

**Ascent:** 1,450ft (450m)

Today's walk leads us along the orchard-lined tracks to the south towards Tabant, where the main souk happens every Sunday. We'll then walk up the valley to the village of Rbat where nearby you can see fossilized dinosaur footprints on exposed slabs of rock. Starting the climb from Ibakalloun, there's the option of a picnic at the top before descending into the valley, crossing the river and continuing to Imelghas.

### Day 4: Aït Bouguemez Valley

#### Option 1 - Iskataffen - Ain Souss

**Distance:** 3.8 miles (6km)

**Ascent:** 260ft (80m)

We'll walk westwards past Iskattafen, where juniper bushes, lush vegetation, twisting streams, and orchards line the valley floor. Walk past the village of Taghdouit, spectacularly built on the end of a mountain ridge, and have tea with a Berber family. Then we'll continue along the valley to Ait ouchkhachan back to Imelghas.

### Option 2 - Sidi Moussa And Tighza Gorge

**Distance:** 9.5 miles (15km)

**Ascent:** 160ft (50m)

Passing the shrine of Sidi Moussa, a conical hill with an ighrem building (defensive mud brick granary store) perched on top, we'll wind our way through fields and orchards. Look up and you'll see stork nests balanced on top of trees as we make our way to a picnic stop near the Gorges of Tighza. On the other side of Aït Bouguemez valley, we'll walk to the village of Aguerd N Ouzrou before returning to Imelghas.

## Day 5: Trails Around M'Goun

### Option 1 - Ighil N Ourir

**Distance:** 4.5 miles (7km)

**Ascent:** 550ft (170m)

We head south into the foothills of the Ighil n' Ait Ourit ridge, where 2,800-metre-high peaks tower above us. Follow the valley past fields, oak trees and juniper. Mule tracks then take us past Iskattafen with a short climb to loop to the next valley. We'll return along Tadghouit valley to Imelghas.

### Option 2 - Aguerd N Ouzrou – Igoudammen – Tabant

**Distance:** 8.5 miles (14km)

**Ascent:** 1,150 ft (350m)

This walk explores the southern parts of the valley towards the mountain range that includes M'goun, the second highest peak in North Africa. We'll pass the village of Aguerd D Ouzrou and climb up Ighill n' Igoudamene towards the high mountain pass of Tizi n' Ait lmi. We'll then descend to the village of Tabant on stony mule tracks.

## Day 6: Souss Region

### Option 1 - Sidi Moussa – Timit – Aguerd Nouzrou

**Distance:** 4 miles (6.5km)

**Ascent:** 450ft (140m)

From the village, we'll walk to Sidi Moussa, built on the top of a distinctive conical hill, which was used until recently to store and protect all the village harvests. The ascent is very short but quite steep. We'll then descend into the village of Timit, carrying on across fields to the village of Aguerd N Ouzrou. Keep an eye open for dinosaur tracks in the exposed rock. Apple orchards and streams also surround our return walk to Imelghas.

### Option 2 - Iskattafen – Ahabbay - Ighil N Tissila

**Distance:** 8 miles (13km)

**Ascent:** 950ft (300m)

Today we'll walk through the village of Imelghas, past Iskattafen, and up into the foothills below the mountain of Ighil n'Aït Ourit. Rocky paths are lined with juniper and oak trees as we follow the valley to Ahabbay. Walnut and apple trees also blanket the valley below, while the fields are still managed by hand. We'll climb up to a picnic spot with views towards M'goun then walk to the small shepherds' huts to Ighil n Tissila and back down the valley to Imelghas.

## Day 7: Women's Cooperative

Our last day is an opportunity to meet the local women who make rugs, felt, and bottle honey. Have a go at some rug-making or cooking Berber bread if you fancy. In the afternoon, we'll travel back to Marrakech and enjoy a traditional dinner to celebrate our final night.

## Day 8: Departure Day

Transfer to Marrakech airport for departure.

## ACCOMMODATION

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### Riad Bahia Salam, Marrakech - Morocco

What was once a traditional Moroccan family home has now been lovingly converted into a luxurious and tranquil oasis just a short stroll from the bustle of Jemâa El Fna square. Simple yet tastefully decorated rooms are furnished in typical Arabo-Berber style while public areas are all long low sofas, covered in plush cushions, and handwoven Arabic rugs. Outside, you'll find a sleek pool and terrace area complete with a fully stocked bar, and a mosaic-tiled courtyard garden ideal for cooling off in the shade. When it comes to dining, there's a beautiful restaurant serving local cuisine.

### Auberge Dar Itrane, Aït Bougmez Valley - Morocco

Surrounded by the green-carpeted mountains of the Aït Bougmez valley, this traditional riad-style lodge provides spectacular views over the stunning landscape – particularly from the roof terrace. Rooms are simple and the accommodation is basic but boasts an outdoor pool and a restaurant serving typical dishes using local ingredients. And thanks to the lodge's remote location, a clear night rewards with incredible views of the starry skies.

## USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

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### Weather & Seasonality

Morocco enjoys a generally warm, dry climate throughout the year. Some areas we visit in the north of the country have mild summers and cold winters; others, like in the desert, can be hot during the day with temperatures dropping at night. Please note that the temperature can drop significantly in the mountains.

### Joining Instructions (With Flights)

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from a range of UK airports\* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email [reservations@hfholidays.co.uk](mailto:reservations@hfholidays.co.uk)

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

## Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

If you prefer to book the holiday without flights and make your own travel arrangements you will still be able to make use of the return group transfers between the airport and hotel, which are included in the cost of your holiday. You must contact us on [+44 \(0\)20 3974 8865](tel:+44(0)2039748865) or email [reservations@hfholidays.co.uk](mailto:reservations@hfholidays.co.uk) at least 8 weeks before your holiday start date to provide your flight details if you wish to join the transfers. If you do not contact us, we will assume you are making independent travel arrangements.

If you are arriving ahead of the group, and are meeting them at the first hotel, please leave a message at the hotel reception for the HF Holidays' leader or local leader, detailing your room number, and a mobile telephone number if possible. The leader will contact you once the group arrives. If you are arriving after the group, a message will be left for you at the hotel reception, welcoming you and giving details of the time and place to meet the group.

## Essential Information

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

### Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

### Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags
- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

### Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device

## Dietary Requirements

Please contact us as far in advance as possible if you have any specific dietary requirements and we will do our best to meet your needs.

If you require a specific meal on the flight, please let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 96 hours before travel.

## Vaccinations & Health

This information is subject to change. In all cases, we highly recommend you consult your GP both for up to date details and for more information on what is appropriate to your situation.

As a rule, travellers should be up to date with their routine vaccinations and boosters as recommended in the UK - including, for example, the MMR and diphtheria, tetanus, polio vaccines. Hepatitis A & Tetanus vaccinations are recommended. Diphtheria, Typhoid and rabies are sometimes recommended too.

## Passports & Visas

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice.

### Passport

Your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay; no additional period of validity beyond this is required but it's recommended to have at least 6 months additional validity beyond your date of entry.

### Visa

British nationals don't need a visa to enter Morocco for tourism for up to 3 months. Make sure your passport is stamped on arrival – some tourists have experienced difficulty when leaving because they don't have an entry stamp.

## Useful Information

Arabic is the official language in Morocco, and it is used throughout the country as the everyday spoken language. This is Moroccan Arabic, and it differs quite widely from standard Arabic.

Berber is spoken in the Rif and Atlas Mountains, and French is still regularly used in the cities. Many in tourist sites speak at least some English but some simple pleasantries will go a long way. Your local guide can help you with this, but a few basics include:

'Es salaam alaykum' – Hello (formal)

'Wa alaykum salaam' – response to greeting

'Shukran' – Thank you

'Afak/'afik/'afakum' – Please (said to M/F/Pl)

'Bessalama/M'a ssalama' – Goodbye

You will be in Berber country a lot, and some useful words in Berber are:

'Emen' – Water

'Yella!' – Let's go!

'Tighmi' – House

'T'ish!' – Eat!

'Munchk?' – How much?

'Oho' - No

'Iya' – Yes

Morocco is a Muslim country. Whilst many places we visit are generally accepting of Western attire (you will see Moroccans wearing all styles!), traditional views are still held in smaller villages and in the medinas of the cities.

On your trip we advise you to dress modestly and respectfully. Both men and women should aim to cover their shoulders and knees, especially if visiting religious sites or rural areas. Opt for loose-fitting and conservative clothing to show respect for local customs and traditions.

Once you have made your booking, you will receive a pre-holiday questionnaire where we ask for details of next of kin, and insurance details. You must complete and return this to us- we need to have this from you at least 10 weeks before travel. Please also inform us of any medical situation which may affect your enjoyment of the holiday. This is important because our leaders have to consider both group and individual safety at all times.

Whilst out with the group, we respectfully request that you:

- Please listen to any safety instructions from the leader
- Keep group members in view, especially if weather or visibility is poor
- Please stay where you are if you become separated from the group. The leader will retrace their steps to find you.

Each leader carries a first aid kit but is not allowed to supply any medication including aspirin, paracetamol, antihistamines, and antiseptic cream. You may wish to bring these items with you in your own kit.

In the unlikely event that your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call emergency services on 19 or 177 (police, either city or suburban) or 15 (ambulance). Please then call our emergency number (sent in your final dispatch) and let us know there is a problem.

## Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We work with Campbell Irvine to provide you with competitive single and annual multi-trip insurance. Please see our website for more information and details of how to contact them for a quote: <https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/about-us/booking-information/insurance>.

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/>.

If you are arranging your own travel insurance, please ensure it is adequate for your specific itinerary. Generally, this should include cover for walking at altitudes over 2,000m, and this will cover you for a range of our holidays. On this holiday we will on one occasion be walking at an altitude over 3,000m.

## Luggage

### Luggage Allowance

Please check details of your airline's baggage allowance, as shown on your e-ticket. Remember to also check any connecting flights you may have booked.

### Lost/Damaged Luggage

If your bag or its contents are damaged or lost while in the airline's care, this should be reported to the baggage service agents at the airport on arrival. They will assess the damage; in some cases, the airline may decide to settle your claim immediately.

You will be given a reference to quote to your insurance company if an immediate settlement is not possible - in many cases, baggage claims can only be accepted in writing. A baggage claim form must be obtained from the airport.

## Local Currency

The unit of currency is the Moroccan Dirham (dh). We recommend taking some hard currency (Sterling, Euros or US Dollars), credit / debit cards, in order to give you a few options. Your guide will be able to advise on where to change money. Exchange rates do not vary significantly between banks .

## Local Time

GMT/UTC +1

## Electricity

Electricity is 220V/50Hz; plugs are European style, so make sure to bring an adaptor for any UK appliances.

## ATM Availability

Moroccan Dirhams can only be obtained in Morocco. Cash can be withdrawn from ATMs in larger towns, although service in smaller towns can be erratic. Most major hotels now have more reliable ATMs. Most major credit cards are accepted in larger restaurants, hotels, guest houses and the occasional shop in the souks, with Visa and MasterCard being accepted most widely. Traveller's cheques are not advised

## TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

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These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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