

TREK SAHARA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How fit do I need to be?

This trekking challenge is all about **endurance** fitness rather than speed and it is certainly not a race. Try to train with your day-pack on your back and get used to drinking and carrying water during your training. Sticking to our training plan will really pay off. Although the desert is fairly flat, the heat will have an impact on your fitness levels and your endurance, and the deep sand on parts of the trek can be tiring to walk in. You will be up early in the mornings and trekking for approximately 6-8 hours each day so good fitness is very important. Distances are misleading in this type of terrain, and it's more useful when training to think about the hours you need to walk for! This trek is achievable for most people provided they **train well in advance**.

Keep in mind that this is designed to be a personal or fundraising challenge, and many people will find elements of the trip difficult at times, whether it is the physical trekking, changing weather, the difference in culture or something else. Try to work as a team and help each other out during any difficulties. While there are challenges, **the enjoyment and rewards that come from trekking in the Sahara Desert are nothing short of majestic!**

What will the trekking be like?

You will be trekking over stony, firm desert floor (*hamada*) and loose, soft and, in places, steep sand dunes, through remote desert and the occasional small oasis. Try to train on a variety of terrain to get your legs used to the challenge of uneven ground. If you are unsteady on your feet you will find trekking poles useful but do make sure you use these when training. You will trek approximately 80-100km overall, depending on the exact route (distances vary over time because of the natural movement of the dunes.) It's much more useful when training to think about the hours that you will be walking for, rather than the distance. The heat adds to the challenge!

Who accompanies us on the trek from Discover Adventure?

Your trip will be led by an **experienced Discover Adventure leader**. Sometimes they accompany you from the UK, but they may meet you in-country. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first-aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

Will there be a doctor trekking with us as well?

Dependent on group size, an expedition doctor or medic may accompany the group. Our medics are there to provide first aid and promote day-to-day welfare on the trip; they carry a robust medical kit, but cannot possibly be equipped with everything needed to counter any given situation. They also provide crucial support to our leaders and, as they are usually found at the back of our groups, are also experts at encouraging you when things get tough.

Who else will accompany the group on this challenge?

Our local support crew is made up of local Berber guides, a small caravan of camels, drivers and cooks. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely. The remote night-camps with campfires and Berber singing are often a real highlight of the trip!



01722 718444
info@discoveradventure.com



What is the accommodation like?

At the start and end of the trek you stay in a good standard hotel (2-3*) on a twin-share basis. If you are travelling alone, you will be paired up with someone of the same sex and similar age – please let us know if you wish to share with a particular person, if you have not already done so.

Whilst on the trek you will be **camping in tents with room for 2 people plus your luggage**. It's expected that everyone will share tasks together, like putting up tents each evening in camp. Many people do sleep under the incredible star-strewn night skies and amongst the sand dunes so you have the option to do either – we highly recommend it. Being out of your comfort zone adds to the challenge and makes your achievement all the sweeter.

Can I request single accommodation?

There may be a limited number of single rooms in the hotels at the start and end of the trip, subject to request and at an additional cost, on a first-come, first-served basis. You may also enquire about a single tent on the trek itself if this is important to you. Sharing a room is a really good ice-breaker if you don't know anyone else on the trip, so don't worry too much about it!

What are the transport arrangements for the group and our kit?

A coach or minibus, depending on the group size, will take you to the start and the end of the trek. Your luggage will be transported each day by our caravan of camels as you trek, so you therefore cannot access your main packs until the end of each day. You will need to carry a day-pack with your trekking essentials (i.e. water, spare layers, waterproof, sun-cream, hat, camera, snacks, etc.). Ensure you get used to walking with a day-pack with a similar load while training.

What will the weather be like?

The days are usually clear and sunny, and temperatures can exceed 35°C (95°F). Never underestimate the power of the sun's rays, even when it feels cool, is cloudy or windy. It's very easy to get burnt calves or backs of arms, so do cover up and ensure that you bring minimum Factor 30 sun-cream (preferably higher) along with a high SPF lip salve.

It is cooler in the mornings and evenings however, and the temperature drops noticeably as soon as the sun sets. There may even be frost on the tents some mornings. It can rain in this part of the desert, though it is not common.

What will I be eating?

It is amazing what the local crew produce in this environment, the food is freshly-cooked and plentiful so it is important that you make sure you are eating well for the long days of trekking. Breakfast is usually porridge, bread, fig jam, honey, cheese, tea and coffee. For lunch you will have bread, salads, cheese, olives, fish, vegetables and fruit. Dinners typically start with soup, followed by couscous or tagine with chicken and vegetables, and tinned fruit or other desserts. There will also be biscuits and dried fruit (typically dates or figs), and plenty of mint tea.

I have a specific dietary need; will there be enough for me to eat?

Being vegetarian, gluten/dairy free, or having other dietary requirements is usually not a problem provided you **let us know well in advance** (airlines need to know at least 8 weeks prior to the departure). Please do not expect the variety you would have at home – we will be among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help, and in some regions certain foods are hard to access. If you feel you aren't getting enough energy because of your dietary requirements please talk to the leaders on the trip – they can't help unless they know there's a problem. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.



01722 718444
info@discoveradventure.com

DISCOVER
Adventure

Do I need to bring snacks?

Bring enough snacks to keep you going each day - around **2-3 tasty treats a day will suffice**. We recommend a combination of slow and fast release snacks such as cereal bars, flapjacks, salted nuts, chocolate bars, and a packet of sweets. Bringing a combination of treats will keep you interested in snacking as consistent energy levels are important.

How much do I need to drink?

Drink, drink, drink! Due to the nature of the challenge and the hot and humid climate, you will need to drink significantly more in Morocco than you would trekking in the UK. You will be provided with plenty of drinking water at breakfast for the day ahead, and in the evenings at dinner, so ensure that you keep topping up your bottles and hydration systems. You will sweat a lot; bring plenty of rehydration sachets. You will need to drink at least 2-3ltrs of water a day, and you will be carrying this in your day packs so try and get used to trekking with that amount of weight on you when training.

Outside of trekking times, you may need to provide your own water and, while sometimes it is unavoidable, we generally discourage buying small bottles of water as this has a higher environmental impact. We strongly recommend you invest in a filtration bottle such as Water-to-Go, which allows you to drink from (eg) hotel taps and airports without concern. Please follow the link on our [Responsible Tourism](#) web-page for more information and a discount code. Even with a filtration bottle, there may obviously be times you need to buy bottled drinks, but it will cut down on plastic waste, and can be used for many DA trips to come!



What is the celebration meal?

At the end of your challenge, there will be a special meal to celebrate your achievements. Please check your trip itinerary to confirm whether you will need to set aside funds to pay for this on the night. Alcohol is not served at this venue, but can be purchased in advance from an off-license if you wish; discretion is required, so please check with your leader.

What about toilets?

Toilet facilities won't be like home. There are rarely toilet facilities during the day, so please be prepared. You will need to take baby wipes, nappy sacks and paper in order to make sure you **leave no trace** whilst out on your trek. These can then be discarded in the nearest bin. In camp our toilet tents are erected for us; expect well-dug long-drops with scenic views! The toilet facilities in your accommodation will be of the standard you would expect in tourist hotels, though if you stop in cafés en route they may be more basic, or French-style squat toilets.

What can I do to prevent illness during the challenge?

On the trip itself, food is cooked and prepared to very high standards and you can eat with confidence – though illness can spread through the group very quickly when you are living closely together so it's important to bring **antiseptic hand sanitiser** for use after the toilet and before eating to minimise the spread of germs. Also, avoid sharing water bottles and sharing each other's food or sweets as this spreads germs very easily, even if you are being careful.

We'd advise against drinking tap water (or cleaning teeth in it), and avoid ice cubes in drinks unless you are sure they are made with bottled/treated water. For the same reason avoid salads, raw vegetables and fruit that you cannot peel yourself, as well as unpasteurised dairy products.

There is always a risk of sunstroke and dehydration on a trip of this nature if you are not careful. Drink lots of water, replenish your salt intake and protect yourself against the sun: use high factor sun cream or sun block, wear a hat and sunglasses. The key point for good health is to keep your resistance high – eat and drink well – and to be fully aware of all possible health risks such as poor hygiene, undressed open cuts, untreated water and bites.



01722 718444
info@discoveradventure.com



Any safety tips for non-trekking time?

One of the benefits of group travel is safety – you all look out for each other, and there's no reason to be alone. Sometimes, however, it's easy to lose concentration in a group. Stay focussed in busy areas such as bus stations and markets. Theft is no more common in Morocco than in most European countries, but you should be on your guard against pick-pockets and bag-slashers, especially in the cities. Take responsibility for yourself and your belongings. Leave valuables behind; you don't need your best jewellery and gadgets on this trip. Be careful at night and avoid walking or getting into taxis alone.

What if I have any issues during the trip?

Our leaders are very experienced and work very hard to ensure your trip runs as smoothly and enjoyably as possible, and we're sure that you'll have a wonderful time. If you do have any concerns or problems during the trip **please talk to the crew and give them the opportunity to explain or rectify things while they are able**. They are all very approachable!

What are the contingencies in case of an emergency on this challenge?

The crew will have a range of communication methods in case of emergency, extensive medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. If you are feeling unwell on this trek, tell your leaders and listen to their advice as your health and safety is our top priority.

Do I need travel insurance?

As part of your booking conditions, it is **compulsory that you ensure you have adequate travel insurance cover** to cover you for trekking. See [the insurance page on our website](#) for further information.

What if this trip does not meet minimum numbers?

Every group needs a minimum number of bookings for it to be feasible to run. Cancelling a trip is rare, and we do our utmost to avoid it. You will be contacted in plenty of time if we are concerned about the group size, and we will discuss options with you.

What currency should I take?

The Moroccan currency is the Dirham, divided into 100 centimes. It can only be obtained in Morocco. Bring Sterling or US dollar cash; both are easy to exchange into local currency in the main towns. Scottish currency is not. Damaged or torn notes are hard to get rid of so try not to accept them. Carry low denomination notes as you will have difficulty obtaining change otherwise.

Away from the main towns, changing money will be difficult and there is little to spend it on. Some credit cards are accepted in larger restaurants, hotels and the occasional shop in the souks. Cash can be withdrawn from ATMs in main cities.

How much money will I need to bring with me?

How much spending money you take depends largely on how much you might want to buy in the way of personal items, drinks and souvenirs; you will not need much on the trek itself. You will be able to exchange sterling and other major currencies into Dirham on arrival at the airport (keep your receipts). Out of this spending money, you will need to set aside money for the meals not included as part of your itinerary, and crew tips (though they can also be given in sterling or dollars). Once back at your hotel, you will be able to change further money should you need to. Do make sure you spend it before you go through security at the airport, as you cannot spend Dirham when you are in the departure lounge area.

If for reasons due to fitness, illness or any unforeseen circumstances, you have to **depart from the group arrangements**, you must ensure that you have enough funds to cover any resultant costs – for example, extra hotel accommodation or meals. Some of these may be recoverable through your travel insurance, depending on your cover and the circumstances.



What do you recommend for crew tips?

The local crew work incredibly hard and it is great if we can show our appreciation in the form of a tip. The guide is **£40-50 per participant**, dependent on group size, which is split out between the local crew, but this is of course at your discretion. Your trip leader will give you further advice. Please do not give out individual tips to any crew who you feel have helped you personally, as they work well as a team and those out of sight will be working just as hard as those with you on the trek. Please do feel free to give away your used or unwanted kit on the last trekking day as the Berber team is always grateful for extra kit.

Are there many shopping opportunities?

There are plenty of markets and shops selling souvenirs and crafts at the start and end of the trip. Many market sellers will expect you to haggle over price. Haggling is great fun, and a good way of interacting with local people. A good rule of thumb is to offer a third of the asking price and meet somewhere in the middle. However, while the intention is to knock the price down, be aware that if the sellers are desperate for immediate cash they will sell at a loss. So do not drive too hard a bargain; remember that £1 means a lot more to the seller than it will to you once you get home.



How do I ensure I'm sensitive to the local culture?

At Discover Adventure we expect our groups to be sensitive to other cultures – be especially respectful in public areas and near places of worship, but also remember that even in the most remote locations, we have local crew with us and they deserve your respect. Remember that what you would wear on a hot day in the UK is not necessarily acceptable in other countries, particularly in Muslim regions. Women are advised to avoid tight or strappy tops in favour of regular T-shirts; men should wear a top at all times. Avoid short shorts; knee-length, or loose trousers are preferable in rural areas. By dressing thoughtfully, you not only experience minimum hassle but do not offend the local people; many of our trips rely on these small communities.

Try to research a little about the culture before you go, or learn a few basic phrases; it all goes a long way to ensuring you connect with local people in a positive way. Thanks in advance for helping to maintain the good reputation of Discover Adventure groups.

Will there be Wi-Fi, phone reception and charging points?

The Wi-Fi in the hotel at the start and the end of the challenge may not be as fast as you're used to at home and there won't be any internet access when on the trek itself. The phone reception will be limited and there won't be access to power for charging devices. You may wish to bring your own solar charging device. Treat this challenge like a '**Digital Detox**' and tell your relatives that no news is good news, as the leader will have a satellite phone for emergencies only.

For voltage and plug information in hotel accommodation, see <https://www.iec.ch/world-plugs>

When will we know the flight details and meeting point?

Discover Adventure will usually confirm the main group flight details 6 weeks prior to the trip departure so you will know which airport you are travelling from and can arrange suitable transport. You will receive your **Final Joining Instructions** in the month prior to the trip departure date, within which specific details of **where and when to meet your trip leader** and fellow trekking participants will be confirmed.

Will I need my flight ticket before the trip departure date?

Unless specified otherwise, you do not need to have your flight ticket prior to the trip departure date as this will be given to you by the trip leader or a Discover Adventure representative at the airport. If there are alternative plans, your Challenge Co-ordinator will inform you.



01722 718444
info@discoveradventure.com



Can I make my own flight arrangements or alter my flight from the main group?

Flights are included on this trip and you will automatically be booked on to the main group flights, unless you let us know otherwise in good time (no later than three months prior to the trip departure). It is possible to make your own flight arrangements; a land-only discount will be applied. See the **Flight Arrangements Form** in your Passenger Portal.

It is also possible to extend your stay and deviate from the main group flight booking (fee applies); again, see the form. Note that you will remain on the same flight path, returning from the same airport. There is sometimes a supplement to pay if the flights are more expensive on your requested day; early requests have the best chance of avoiding this. We will always contact you if this is the case to check whether you are happy to proceed. If you are keen to upgrade your flight, this may be possible at a supplement and you can contact us for an approximate price but please note that this is often very expensive and we will require full payment upfront.

What do I need to bring?

Refer to your **Kit List** to ensure that you have all the essentials for comfortable trekking. Make sure your walking boots are lightweight, waterproof (it can rain in the desert) and well-worn in. You may wish to bring some foot powder to absorb sweat and help prevent blisters. When the weather is hot and dry, the conditions get extremely dusty; you will need quality sunglasses with good surround protection, and a sun hat which covers your neck. A shamla (traditional desert headscarf) is highly recommended; they are available to buy when we break our journey to the trek start-point.

What is the luggage allowance?

Your main luggage limit on the plane is **20kg with a 5kg allowance for hand luggage**. Stick to the kitlist and you shouldn't be anywhere near that limit. Don't forget that suitcases are not suitable – **soft rucksacks/kitbags only** (with no wheels on or external frames) so they are suitable to be loaded onto the camels. Discover Adventure Kitbags are specially designed for the rigours of our challenges and are very affordable. See details in your Portal, or just email us.

What are the passport and visa requirements?

A valid 10-year passport is essential; we recommend it has at least six months remaining before expiry. British passport-holders do not currently require a visa. UK nationals should refer to the foreign travel advice [given here](#) for more information.

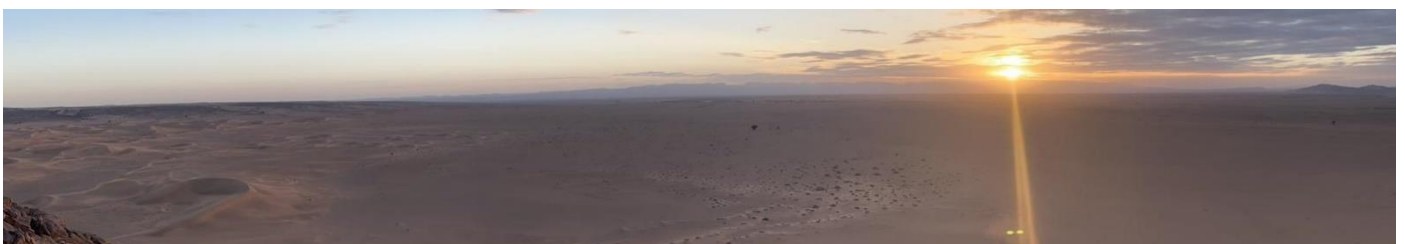
All other nationalities are responsible for checking entry requirements with their own embassies or consulates for the latest information. Please do so in good time. You will be asked to fill in an immigration form on arrival, so please keep the information given to you at the airport by your leader, which will include your hotel details.

There may also be health declarations to make. Do check the [FCO Entry Requirements](#) information carefully, as regulations can and do change without warning.

How can I find out more about the requirement for vaccinations?

You will need to ensure that you have the vaccinations required for this trip prior to travel. We recommend you ensure your routine UK schedule of vaccinations is up-to-date (especially Tetanus) and check the [NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro](#) website for further guidance and information. Always consult your local GP or travel clinic for the latest health advice, as they are aware of any updates in World Health Travel requirements.

In this part of Morocco you are not in a malaria risk area. Please check the above link if you are travelling to other areas. Cover up at dawn and dusk in loose-fitting clothing, use a good insect repellent and avoid wearing strongly perfumed toiletries – there will still be biting insects even if they do not carry malaria.



01722 718444

info@discoveradventure.com

