6-DAY ADVENTURE

MOUNT TOUBKAL IN WINTER

Morocco

In the winter months, under a blanket of snow the High Atlas mountains are a magical place for some fantastic winter trekking. The peaks and high passes that looked spectacular in summer are now even more enticing as they glisten with ice and the promise of crisp, cold mountain air on windswept summit ridges. If you have a craving to hear the crunch of snow under your boot and the feeling of your crampons biting into the ground as you kick steps upwards to reach a distant peak, you have come to the right place.

On this adventure we will climb the highest peak in Morocco and North Africa, Mount Toubkal (4167m), with the added challenge of this being in winter conditions. You will be accompanied by expert mountain guides every step of the way and all your technical gear is provided.

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience the spectacular High Atlas in winter conditions
- Climb the highest peak in North Africa
- Explore vibrant Marrakesh
- Trip fully carbon offset as standard

Trek
Transfer
Marrakech
Imlil
Aremd
Sidi Chamarouch
Nelter Refuge
Mount Toubkal
Tizi N'Ougane
KANDOO
ADVENTURES

ITINERARY

DAY 1

ARRIVAL IN MARRAKESH

Arrive in Marrakesh and transfer to our Riad in the Old Town. After clearing immigration and collecting our luggage, we exit the arrivals building where one of our team will be waiting for you. If you wish to exchange money in the airport make sure you do this before leaving the building. We take a private transfer to our riad and have the rest of the day free to explore Marrakesh. Our pre-trek briefing will take place at 7pm this evening in the riad foyer, here we will meet our guide and gain an in depth understanding of the trek we are about to embark on.

Transport: **Private transfer**
Accomodation: **Riad**

DAY 2

IMLIL – TOUBKAL REFUGE

This morning our transfer picks us up and takes us to the mountain town of Imlil where we will begin our ascent of the mighty 4000m peak. Leaving Imlil, using mules to carry our luggage, we follow an easy track out of the village passing irrigation channels and cultivated terraces often under the shade of walnut trees. The trail takes us through the village of Aremd and continues up the left hand side of the valley to Sidi Chamarouch where we will stop for lunch. From here the trail is more difficult as the track becomes steep and rocky and we cross the snowline. Depending on the amount of snow at this point, we may need to leave our mules behind and take porters to transport our luggage.

At Sidi Chamarouch, we cross the river and continue up the right hand side of the valley until we reach the refuge at 3210m. The refuge sits at the foot of Mount Toubkal and Ouanoukrim and has a lounge, dormitories, bathrooms and a fireplace. This will be our base for the next two nights.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Ascent: **1407 m**
Max. altitude: **3207 m**
Accomodation: **Refuge**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 3

ACCLIMATISATION HIKE TO TIZI N'OUGANE

Today will be a warm up to get us prepared for the climb ahead. From the refuge we will climb up the valley to a col called Tizi n'Ougane that sits between Mount Toubkal and Ouanoukrim at 3750m.
The track meanders in switchbacks across steep, rocky grounds that is snow covered, so it will provide a good impression of what we will face in the coming days. This will be a good opportunity to try out your crampons provided the conditions are suitable. We return to the refuge for lunch and have a relaxed afternoon preparing for our early morning the following day.

Hiking time: **4 - 5 hours**
Ascent: **543 m**
Descent: **543 m**
Max. altitude: **3750 m**
Accomodation: **Refuge**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 4

TOUBKAL SUMMIT

Leaving the refuge before 5am, we start climbing with head torches up the steep and rocky west flank of Toubkal. The trail zigzags as we gradually gain height before reaching the large depression known as the South Cwm where the angle eases off a little.

We continue upwards on easy angled snow slopes before the route again becomes steeper on the approach to the south col. At the col, the mountain drops away down the east face and we take a break before turning north to follow the ridge to the summit. The final part of the route feels more exposed and care is needed on the steep ground.

We are now standing on the highest peak in north Africa at 4167m. On a clear day the views extend as far as Marrakesh on one side and the vast Sahara Desert on the other. The sense of achievement as you gaze down on the surrounding icy peaks is enormous. After some time to soak up our success we carefully retrace our steps back down the mountain to the refuge and on to Imlil.

Hiking time: **9 - 10 hours**
Ascent: **960 m**
Descent: **2367 m**
Max. altitude: **4167 m**
Accomodation: **Guesthouse**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 5

IMLIL – MARRAKESH

This morning, we take in the beautiful views looking down the valley from our guesthouse in Imlil, and say goodbye to our mule drivers, before hopping on our transfer and heading back to Marrakesh. This afternoon and evening are spent at our leisure in Marrakesh, with time to explore the web of souks weaving their way around our Riad.

Accomodation: **Riad**
Meals included: **Breakfast**

DAY 6

DEPARTURE

Our transfer picks us up from our accommodation and transports us to Menara airport in time for our flight.

Transport: **Private transfer**
Meals included: **Breakfast**

PLEASE NOTE

It is in the nature of a trip of this kind that arrangements and participants have to be flexible. While we use all reasonable endeavours to ensure a trip runs according to your itinerary, the day-to-day agenda and ultimate goal of the trip are taken as aims and not as contractual obligations. It is a necessary condition of your joining any of our trips that you accept this flexibility. Occasionally, we may have to make changes and we reserve the right to do so at any time.

TRIP INFORMATION

DIFFICULTY

An ascent of Toubkal requires you to be in **good physical condition** and have some experience of walking for up to 6 hours a day for several days in a row. The trail will vary from easy trails at lower altitudes, to very steep and rocky terrain covered in snow and ice. There will be changes of altitude as you climb to 4000m and above, and a good amount of endurance is necessary.

It is important the personal equipment you bring with you is suitable for the conditions. Your clothing needs to protect you from very cold temperatures and winds. Please refer to the equipment section below for more information.

There is **no technical climbing** on the ascent of Toubkal. You will be **walking in crampons** and with the use of an **ice axe** but nothing more. Although some previous experience of trekking in winter conditions would be beneficial, it is not necessary. Your guide will provide training in the proper use of crampons and ice axe. If you have any questions about your suitability or how to prepare for this trip please do not hesitate to contact us.

FOOD & DRINK

During your trek your Berber mule drivers will prepare all of your meals. At breakfast there is jam, bread, cookies, fruit, juice, butter, tea, coffee and sometimes a local speciality. A typical lunch will be a salad with fresh vegetables, corn, boiled eggs, tuna and rice or pasta served alongside a traditional curried dish, such as lentil dahl or a tagine.

Evening meals will always be made up of **delicious Moroccan cuisine** prepared with locally sourced ingredients. There will normally be a soup starter followed by a tagine or stew with salad, couscous or pasta and bread. We can provide vegetarian, vegan or gluten free meals on request. If you have special dietary requirements please let us know when booking your trip.

In Marrakesh, at the start and end of your trip, breakfast will be served at your riad and you can sample nearby local restaurants for other meals. The Riad is a 15-minute walk from Jamaâ el Fna Square where there are numerous restaurants with international options such as pizza and burgers, French and local cuisine, or if you are wanting something lighter then look for the roadside cafes offering the locals favourite, Omelette Khaali (lamb omelette) and Mint Tea.

Bottled water is included whilst on your trek, however you will need to source this yourself whilst in Marrakesh.There are plenty of market stalls and shops selling bottled water near to your Riad, hot drinks and bottled water is also available at the Riad.

ACCOMMODATION

Riad

Our Riad is located next to the Royal Palace and is a 15-minute walk from Jamaâ el Fna Square. It has a roof terrace with a swimming pool and a coffee shop on site. You will be staying in en-suite twin rooms and there is free Wi-Fi access throughout the accommodation. A continental breakfast is served on the terrace and you are mere minutes from a plentiful selection of restaurants. If you would prefer to eat in, the staff at the riad will be happy to help you order food to be delivered.

Refuge

The Nelter and Mouflon Refuges sit in the bowl between Toubkal and Ouanoukrim and are the perfect location to rest up ready for your winter ascent! We will stay in mixed sex dormitories with shared bathroom facilities. These are bustling places filled with fellow climbers, where you will be able to share stories and meet other people who have climbed or are preparing for their climb. You will be staying in a shared bunk room that may sleep up to 24 people. Depending on the time of year that you climb, the room may be full. At just over 3000m, it is typical to experience an unsettled night's sleep and people in your room may be getting up at different times throughout the night or early morning to visit the bathroom or start their summit attempt. We recommend taking earplugs and, if you are borrowing a sleeping bag, you should take a warm sleeping bag liner. Please be aware that these are lightweight sleeping bags and are best paired with either another lightweight sleeping bag if you have brought one yourself or a blanket that can be borrowed from the refuge. Bedrooms are not heated. Bathroom facilities may be fairly basic and it is sensible to bring soap or handwash, wet wipes and hand sanitiser. There is a communal lounge with an open fireplace, hot showers, western toilets and Wifi at the refuge. Food here will be prepared in the communal kitchen by our cook.

Guesthouse

The guesthouse in Imlil has cosy accommodation in beautiful, colourful en-suite rooms and a roof terrace with panoramic views over the Imlil valley.

A delicious home-cooked breakfast is served every day from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

TRANSPORT

We use a private air conditioned minibus with seatbelts for our transfers.

LUGGAGE

Main bag weight: 15kg

During the trek your luggage will be carried by mules. To be suitable for carrying, your duffel bag must be flexible not rigid, maximum 100 litres and weigh no more than 15kg. You should also bring a small day pack to carry water, snacks and anything else you may need whilst trekking. This could be used as your hand luggage on your flight.

It is also worth being aware that sometimes our vehicles are unable to take you all the way to the door of the Riad as the streets are very narrow and can become too busy with visitors to drive down during peak times. This may mean you need to carry your luggage for the five minute walk from where the vehicle is able to drop you off, to the Riad itself. A member of the Riad staff will be available to help with this.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

On our Moroccan adventures you will need to arrive in Menara Airport, Marrakesh on Day 1 of your trip. For UK travellers there are direct flights with BA, Easy Jet and Ryan Air from Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton, Stansted and Manchester. With a short stop in Europe, you can travel from virtually any major UK airport. The flight time from the UK is roughly four hours.

There are no direct flights to Marrakesh from the USA but, it is only necessary to have a short stop of less than 3 and a half hours somewhere in Europe. Delta Airways operate convenient flights via Paris from New York, Boston and Los Angles. TAP Air Portugal, American Airlines and United provide further options.

Menara Airport is located 8km outside the city of Marrakesh and the transfer to your Riad will take around 30 mins. Once you have cleared immigration, collected your luggage and exchanged any money you need to, please exit the arrivals doorswhere one of our team will be waiting to meet you.

Due to local regulations at Marrakesh, **mobile boarding passes are not valid for your return flight**. You will need to print your boarding pass and go to the check-in desk to get your documents checked, even if you don't have bags to drop off.

If you are changing airlines or re-checking your luggage at an airport on route, please ensure you leave a minimum of 3 hours between flights. This will account for any delays on arrival, travel time across airports (this can take longer than you think) and time taken to re-check baggage.

Travelling Responsibly

Here at Kandoo, we like to support our guests to make their travel more sustainable. As of 2025, we are offsetting the carbon on all of our trips from arrival in destination to dropping you back off at the airport. As we don't include flight travel in our trips these aren't included in our offsetting calculations, so we are providing you with the calculator below for you to do this yourselves.

eC02 Flights Calculator

PRE-TREK BRIEFING

A pre-trek briefing will be held at 7pm on the evening of Day 1 in the foyer of your Riad in Marrakesh and we strongly recommend that you book a flight that arrives in time for you to attend the briefing. If you should arrive on a later flight, you will be given the full briefing the next morning before you set off on your trek.

BUDGET & CHANGE

The local currency is the **Moroccan Dirham** (MAD). For the most up to date exchange rate please visit www.xe.com.

The dirham is a closed currency, which means it can **only be bought once you arrive in Morocco**. You're allowed to bring in or take out 1000Dh (around £65) but you'll need to exchange the rest on arrival. You can get good exchange rates at the airport with cash and credit card exchange available alongside baggage reclaim and debit/travel card exchange available in the arrivals buildings after you have cleared customs. You can also exchange your GBP (don't bring Scottish, Gibraltar or Northern Irish Sterling notes) or US Dollars to Dirhams at a bank and in most hotels. Keep hold of your receipt to convert your Dirhams back when you leave – you can do this at the airport for a good rate.

A meal out for 2 people in Morocco will cost ~$15. You will need to account for two evening meals in Marrakesh plus money for any lunches whilst in Marrakesh, tips, drinks and souvenirs. Gifts and souvenirs are best acquired from the markets in the Medina. Prepare to get haggling! Our recommended guidance for spending budget in Morocco would be between $50-100 on top of your tips, give you ample souvenir spending money.

TIPS

You should budget for tips for your lead guide, cook and mule / camel drivers. Tipping is common in Morocco but not mandatory and should be based on the level of service you feel you have received. 520 MAD should provide enough tips for this trip.

Recommended tip amounts:

Guide: 170 MAD
Cook: 70 MAD
Mule drivers: 180 MAD – this can be given to the mule drivers and porters when they meet at the snowline on your way back to Imlil and they will split it between themselves
Drivers: 50 MAD
Hotels: 50 MAD

Drivers can be tipped after each journey, between 10-20 MAD depending on the length of your journey. Your cook and mule drivers and porters can be tipped at the end of your trek or at the point when they leave the group (ask your guide if you are not sure). Your lead guide can be tipped after you return to Marrakech at the end of your tour.

Please tip in Moroccan Dirham rather than in your home currency.

Different crew members will be with you for different stages of your trip to Morocco:

- Your guide will be with you every day that you are in Morocco.
- Your cook and mule drivers will be with you while you are on the trek itself
- Your luggage will be transported by mule where there is no snow and by porter where there is snow. The mule drivers and porters are based in Imlil and will return there after rather than stay at the refuge.
- Drivers will provide your airport transfers and transfer you to and from the trek.

This is for guidance only. Tips are always discretionary and if you are not happy with the service you have received you do not have to pay tips.

FORMALITIES & HEALTH

PASSPORT

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after your return date. We recommended you keep a colour photocopy of your passport with you at all times.

VISA

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa to enter Morocco for a period of up to 90 days, however, you should check the latest information with the Moroccan authorities before travelling.

VACCINATIONS

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommend the following vaccinations for travel to Morocco. It is your responsibility to check the latest health information before departure.

Hepatitis A / Hepatitis B / Typhoid / Polio / Tetanus

INSURANCE

Before you can join any Kandoo Adventures trek / climb, you will need to insure yourself against accident, injury, and illness. Your insurance must cover the cost of helicopter evacuation and repatriation if necessary. Make sure your insurer knows of your travel plans, and verify that your policy fully covers your trek / climb, and any other activities you will participate in. Specifically for all our adventures in Morocco, you need to be covered for trekking up to 4200m. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fully and adequately insured for the duration of your trip. Please ensure that all activities, excursions and destinations in your itinerary are included in your travel insurance policy, in addition to your regular cover for cancellation and medical expenses.

We ask that you keep a copy of your policy summary (containing policy number and the emergency contact number for your insurer) in your day sack at all times, so that we can access this information should we need to contact the insurer on your behalf. You will also need to bring details of your insurance cover to the pre-trek briefing.

MEDICATION

Your guide carries a first aid kit at all times but we recommend you carry the following items : - Painkillers - Anti-diarrhoea tablets - Sunscreen (high factor) for lips and skin - Moisturising cream (for sunburn) - Elastic bandage and regular bandages - Sanitary products - Mosquito spray - Blister bandage

OTHER INFORMATION

Alcohol

Although Morocco is more liberal than many other Muslim nations you do need to be careful when purchasing or consuming alcohol. Morocco does allow the consumption of alcohol and you can buy beer, wine and spirits in licensed hotels, bars and supermarkets. In supermarkets there will often be a separate alcohol room which is out of sight. If you attempt to purchase alcohol outside of one of these licensed areas then you may find yourself in trouble with the police.

Bars with a licence to sell alcohol will not usually have windows. This is because although it is legal to purchase and drink alcohol on the premises, you are not allowed to be seen by the general public outside. Officially only tourists are allowed to drink outside but to avoid causing any offence it is best avoided. You are allowed to bring alcohol in to the country with you, but only a maximum of 1 litre.

While in Marrakesh, if you want to have a drink with a meal, it is best to check with the restaurant if they serve alcohol before you sit down. You should also ask if they are happy for you to sit anywhere whilst drinking or if they would prefer you to sit at a corner table out of sight. While you are up in the mountains trekking, things tend to be a bit more relaxed than in the city. However, it is best to show some consideration for your cook and porters by checking with your guide before you crack open the whisky.

Dressing appropriately

Although Moroccan people are very tolerant of tourists it is always a good idea to be respectful of the local customs. We would advise female travellers to keep their knees, shoulders and stomachs covered while out in public to avoid any unwanted attention. You need to balance this conservative style of dress with the excessive heat that you may experience in Marrakesh. A long sleeved maxi dress will keep you covered while providing some airflow to keep you cool. Long sleeve breezy button up shirts, harem trousers or jeans are also good options.

For men it is best not to walk around topless despite the heat. Moroccan men do not tend to wear shorts, although there is certainly no problem with male tourists doing this, if you want to blend in with the locals then go for some loose fitting cotton trousers.

When you are in the mountains things are much more relaxed than in the city. You should wear clothing that is appropriate to the conditions and the activity you are engaged in.

Animal welfare

In the High Atlas Mountains the use of mules and muleteers (otherwise known s the Berber 4X4) is very common. The strong and sure footed mules have spent their lives up here in the mountains and they can transport your gear from A to B with ease. Mules are a big source of income for the local Berber people, as a result they are generally treated with great respect and consideration for their well being. However there are always exceptions and in some cases mules in the High Atlas have experienced terrible neglect and cruelty.

The main problems that cause suffering for mules are traditional bits, overloading, inadequate feeding, wounds, poor footcare and working unfit mules (lame, sick or injured).

Kandoo Adventures are committed to ensuring that the mules we use on our treks receive only the very best treatment. To ensure the animals are never overloaded we have placed restrictions on the weight of the luggage you can bring with you. Your main bag must always be flexible and not weigh more than 15kg. The maximum load a mule can carry is 80kg, this will ensure the health and comfort of the mule as well as a sustainable working life. We will not start trekking with mules who are obviously lame, sick or wounded. We will never condone the use of traditional bits which can cause terrible pain for the animals. We only work with a select number of muleteers who we know and trust to provide the very best level of care to their animals.

EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED BY KANDOO ADVENTURES

- 1 pair of crampons per person (suitable for all types of walking boots)
- 1 ice axe per person
- 1 Helmet per person
- Lightweight sleeping bag
- Comprehensive fist aid kit carried by guides at all times

CLOTHING TO BRING

- Hat for sun protection
- Hat for warmth
- Scarf or head scarf
- Sunglasses with good UV protection
- Long sleeve shirts or cotton t-shirts
- Jumpers, 1 light weight and 1 warm
- Insulated Jacket (very warm)
- Waterproof and windproof hard shell jacket
- Breathable fast drying thermal underwear
- Warm gloves
- Comfortable long trousers x 2 (fast drying)
- Waterproof trousers
- Trainers for the evenings
- Warm socks
- Hiking boots (B2 mountain boots are preferable but not essential, sturdy high rise boots with good ankle support)
- Gaiters (important if you encounter deep snow)

We prefer that you do not wear cotton clothing, including underwear, when participating in activities. When cotton gets wet from water or sweat it ceases to insulate and does not dry quickly. The best materials for outdoor activities are fast drying materials like polyester or materials which are warm when wet like wool. The most powerful materials against the wind and rain are 'breathable' materials like Gore-Tex or Nikwax.

EQUIPMENT TO BRING

- 2 water bottles (minimum 1 litre each) or hydration sack
- Walking poles (if desired)
- Head torch with spare batteries and bulb
- Toiletries (including wet wipes and toilet paper)
- Warm sleeping bag liner
- Container for any toxic rubbish (batteries, sanitary items etc)
- Duffel bag (80 to 100 litres), flexible and water resistant (must not exceed 15kg)
- Daypack (30 to 40 litres) to carry with you each day
- Water purification system (charcoal filter, chlorine tablets or similar)
- Camera

GEAR RENTAL

Our team in Morocco have a large store of items available to rent. These must be requested in advance of your trip and will be brought to you at the pre-trip briefing. Payment must be made locally to the team in Marrakesh. Please see below for approximate rental prices:

Walking boots: 5 Euros / 55 MAD per day
Trekking poles: 3 Euros / 35 MAD per day
Rain jacket: 3 Euros / 35 MAD per day
Backpack: 3 Euros / 35 MAD per day

HOW TO BOOK THIS TRIP

1 CHOOSE YOUR DATE AND CHECK AVAILABILITY

A full list of available dates can be found on our website.

2 CONTACT US

Contact us by phone, email or through our website. We will answer any questions you may have and send you a personalized itinerary and quote.

3 COMPLETE BOOKING AND PAYMENT

When you are ready to book, we will send you a link to our online booking forms and participation agreements. We accept all major credit and debit cards and require a low 20% deposit to secure your place.