


MOROCCO'S CENTRAL ATLAS VALLEYS AND RANGES

MOUNTAIN, COUNTRY AND VALLEY HIKES

NICE 'N EASY PRIVATE ONE DAY ANY DAY HIKES FROM FES



LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY:- GRADE ONE  WALKING MOSTLY ON PATHS AT LOWER LEVELS, SOMETIMES ROCKY, SELDOM FLAT, FOR BETWEEN 4 TO 6 HOURS EACH DAY. GOOD TRAINERS WOULD DO, BUT TAKE BOOTS IF YOU ARE USED TO THEM. FOR ANYONE WHO LEADS A REASONABLY ACTIVE LIFE. HIKING ALWAYS INVOLVES SOME EFFORT. CLEARLY THERE ARE MANY DIFFERING FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DIFFICULTY OF A PARTICULAR HIKE, INCLUDING LENGTH OF DAY, TERRAIN, ALTITUDE AND WEATHER CONDITIONS. SINCE THESE FACTORS ARE NECESSARILY VARIABLE, ANY SYSTEM OF GRADES CAN ONLY PROVIDE A GENERAL INDICATION. WE HAVE TRIED TO MAKE OUR SYSTEM AS CLEAR AS POSSIBLE, BUT IT CANNOT ACCOUNT FOR PERSONAL ABILITIES OR EXPERIENCE.

OF MIDDLE ATLAS MOUNTAIN LAKES, FORESTS AND FAUNA

OBT FES03 4 HOURS' HIKING. Departure from **Fes** at around 8.30 in the morning for an exciting 2 hours' drive towards the



south through the breadbasket of Morocco to the foothills of the Middle Atlas Ranges. After some 30 minutes, we pass by the Kandar Massif (1768m) to arrive at the small 1920s French-built hill station of Immouzèr Du Kandar (1220m), perched on the limestone edge of the Saïss Plateau. Translated from the Berber language, Immouzèr Du Kandar means 'Cultivated Valley', and is also taken from the name of a holy man who has a shrine built in his memory in this region. We pass by the ruined kasbah of the Aït Seghrouchen, continuing on for some 500 yards up along a little road through evergreen holm oak and juniper to the first of our volcanic freshwater lakes - the Dayet Aaoua - near the Chalet Du Lac. Depending on the season of course, for this area is one of porous limestone, we could see around these lakes a large variety of dragonfly and damselfly, as with resident and *seasonal* migratory birds, such as heron, stork, sandpiper, avocet, grebe and egret; duck and coot; wagtail, sand martin and swallow; jay, bluetit, Atlas flycatcher, nuthatch, chaffinch, lark, warbler; buzzard and kite, not always around at the same time. We'll stop for a quiet stroll around the area, accompanied, perhaps, by the knock-knock of the green woodpecker and firecrest in the lakeshore forest. We shall continue on southwards for a further 20kms towards the Tizi Abekhnanes (1769m) and the lakes of Dayet Iferr, Dayet Ifrah and Dayet Hachlaf, driving across the lands of the semi-nomadic Sarhroushen Berber people through hillsides blanketed with juniper, cork, pine and holm oak until we reach the Dayet Afourgha, the most beautiful and wild of them all. Here we again alight from our vehicle to start our 3 hour easy stroll up through a forest teeming with regional flora and fauna until, after an hour, we shall stop for our field picnic. We'll then continue our hike around the lake to rejoin our vehicle at to take us up to the Massif Du Kandar (1768m) and the relaxed ancient walled town of Sefrou which, even only at 850m can be cool in summer and covered with a light blanket of snow in winter. Sefrou (Souq on Friday), is a calm and relatively unspoiled, ochre pisé walled and turreted town, with its nine 'Babs', or gateways, lying in a beautiful wooded valley surrounded by cherry, apple and olive trees. We make a reasonably short stop here to visit the small medina and the maze-like *Mellah*, or old Jewish Quarter, for here there had once been, since pre-Islamic times, a large Berber population converted to Judaism by roving missionaries living alongside the unrepentant Berber peoples. This 1st century town, known for its olive and cherry production, holds a large Fêtes Des Cerises in June and other smaller festivities throughout the year, also hosts a flourishing artisan community. The souqs are lined with the booths of potters, tailors, embroiderers, carpenters and cobblers applying their ancient trades, a magnet for the tourists who do make it up here. When ready we get back on our transportation for our relaxed 28km trip back to the most ancient of the Imperial Cities.



OUR PRICES WILL INCLUDE: Private round trip transportation Fes - Dayet Afourgha/Sefrou - Fes. An experienced licensed bilingual mountain guide throughout. Light field picnic lunch. Medical and Accident Insurance. **FIELD PICNIC LUNCH:** Consists normally of fresh Moroccan salad, cheese, tuna fish *, fruit, bread, mint tea. * If **vegetarian or vegan** please pre-advise.

OUR PRICES WILL NOT INCLUDE: *Accommodation pre & post, nor transfers from/to Fes' airport.* Gratuity to guide and chauffeur. Any expenditure of a personal nature. Bottled or gaseous water, nor anything not specifically mentioned in the itinerary.

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IT IS RECOMMENDED YOU BRING WITH YOU: Walking boots or good high trainers; hats, sunscreen, sunglasses; binoculars, cameras and nibbles; filled water bottle.