

## THE MOROCCAN HIGH ATLAS RANGE

### MOUNTAIN COUNTRY AND VALLEYS

Escape the

heat

NICE 'N EASY PRIVATE ONE DAY ANY DAY EXCURSIONS FROM MARRAKECH.

# THE OUIRGANE 'HAPPY' VALLEY

OBTRAK12. 6 HOURS

## MARRAKECH - OUIRGANE VALLEY - MARRAKECH.



Departure by car from Marrakech around 9 in the morning for an exhilarating hour's drive south across the Haouz Plain with its olive-groves and citrus-tree orchards to the picturesque Berber town of Ouirgane (pronounced *weergan*) set in the foothills of the Western High Atlas mountains. As we start to ascend into the High Atlas Valleys, we pass through the Berber town of Tahanaoute to the first Berber village in this region of the Atlas Mountains -Azrou, meaning "rock" where you'll find it hard to spot the mosque - a somewhat strange phenomenon - before winding our way up past the Moulay Brahim Gorges and into the high valleys – so hold on to your hats. We shall pass under the little town of Zaouiat Moulay Brahim perched on a cliff overlooking the oued (river) to proceed past small, riverside irrigated plots, some of which are centuries old where you may see the hardy Berber women and men tilling their soil before we reach the market town of Asni at the crossroads of the Aït Mizene and Assif Ammassine Valleys with the impressive Jbel Toubkal and sisters to our left. Known for its amethysts and market when inhabitants from surrounding hamlets meet there to negotiate their precious harvests, stock up on essential items and hear the all-important gossip, we may make a short stop here as you soak up the hustle and bustle before continuing into the Assif Ammassine Valley and through a low pass to where red earth mixes with a profusion of greens, where the crisp, clean air will refresh you; where walnut and chestnut trees shade the paths in and out of the villages, each irrigated terrace of land carrying a patchwork of blown barley, corn and vegetables. This is Ouirgane (1000m), an attractive hamlet set in another of Morocco's tranquil 'Happy Valleys'. The hardy Berber farmers tend their grazing goats and sheep which seek the shade of the spreading branches of olive, juniper berry trees, almond, walnut, fig and pomegranates. Depending, of course, on the season, you may get to see good numbers of butterflies including the Atlas Blue, African Babal Blue and Small Copper together with the larger, impressive Scarce Swallowtail and Cleopatra; dragonflies including Red Darter and some bird sightings may include Woodchat Shrike, Spotted Flycatcher and the Common Bulbul above the fields of wildflowers and rose gardens. We may stroll around the charming village before taking a light lunch in one of the better hotels before setting back down to Marrakech after hours in fresh mountain air. **L.**

OUR PRICES WILL INCLUDE: Private transportation Marrakech - Ourika - Marrakech. A light lunch. Bottled or gaseous water. Medical and Accident Insurance.

OUR PRICES WILL NOT INCLUDE: *Accommodation pre & post, nor transfers from/to Marrakech's' airport.* Gratuity to chauffeur. Any expenditure of a personal nature, nor anything not specifically mentioned in the itinerary.

To choose you hotel or ryad, please close this page and go to [Find a Hotel](#) or [Find a Ryad](#).

IT IS RECOMMENDED YOU BRING WITH YOU: Good trainers, hat, sunscreen, sunglasses; hygienic 'wipes'. Walking socks; day pack 'bum bag', insect repellent, camera and possibly some biros and sweets for the local mountain Berber children.

