

Up, Up and Away

Applicable to all ages!



Hot Air Ballooning above Morocco's Western High Atlas plains.

OBTHB01m Validity: Every day - Year round, *except 15 June to 15 September*. Minimum 2 Persons per flight.



The first passengers in a hot air balloon flight were a sheep, a duck and a rooster, launched by the brothers Joseph and Etienne Montgolfier on the 19th September 1783. The first recorded flight in a hot air balloon of some 22 minutes was made by the Marquis d'Arlandes and Mr. Pilatre de Rosier in Paris on the 21st November of that same year. We've come a long way since then, but the principle is the same. Balloons are aircraft and, as such, both craft and certified pilots are governed, as with all aircraft and pilots, by Civil Aviation Regulations. Piloting a balloon takes skill, yet the controls are quite simple. The pilots' knowledge of the area and the prevailing daily variations aloft in the layers of wind currents are used to steer a 1 hour not-too-exact course, usually in a westerly direction from the launch site near Marrakech, to move calmly and gracefully over the ground, in accordance with the air mass flow, some 800 to 1000m to the north-east of Marrakech, over oases and secluded Berber villages, the terraced irrigated fields of the Oueds Tinsift and N'Fis of the Al Haouz Plain to drift alongside the northern Jbilet hills. You can see for miles and miles, lulled to the music of silence, the awesome Western High Atlas Mountains to the south as a constant wonder. In free air balloon flights, the sensation of vertigo simply does not exist. It is as if you are suspended in the wind, with the heavens as your reference point.



On the eve of your reserved flight, our Captain/Pilot shall call your riad or hotel to brief you on the next morning's flight and expected meteorological conditions and reconfirms your oh-so-early-in-the-morning pick up (between 5:30 and 6:30 according to the season) in an air-conditioned 4 wheel drive vehicle to take you to the launch site chosen for that morning, not far from the famous Palmeraie of Marrakech. Once there, the balloon is prepared for flight - and we hope you'll take part in the fun - you board your gondola and, on the instruction of the pilot to his ground crew of "lâchez tout" - 'cast off' - the magic moment arrives as we rise vertically up towards the Moroccan heavens. We are followed by a chase vehicle, in constant radio communication with the pilot and whose crew establishes the day's most suitable landing site. Once we have our 'kiss landing' - in the worst case we'd have a gentle drag of but a few yards - our 4 wheel drive is awaiting us, and, after we have collapsed and stored the balloon, we shall make a tour of some of the Berber villages we have over-flown, to stop and have a glass or two of mint tea, some Moroccan pastries or fresh bread dipped in olive oil, in the home of one of the Berber inhabitants. At around midday, you will be taken back to your hotel in Marrakech, armed with a Certificate to show your friends or family back home to show them 'We've been there' and a basketful of delightful memories.

OUR PRICES PER PERSON (MINIMUM 2) WILL BE BASED ON EITHER A

Shared flight OR **Champagne VIP flight** OR **Exclusive VIP flight**

OUR PRICES WILL INCLUDE:

For an Exclusive VIP flight: Sole occupancy 1 hour actual flight; services of an experienced, qualified pilot with current French and Moroccan Pilot's Licences and Air Worthiness Certificates (France & Morocco); ground support crew, support vehicle; *private round trip transfers* from your hotel or riad in Marrakech to launch site and return; French champagne and Moroccan pastries during the flight; a private **tour** of the villages together with a visit of Berber family home for mint tea and snack; a 'Flight' Certificate. All relevant Insurances whilst in the vehicle and hot air balloon.

For a Champagne VIP flight: all as above, except that the transfers, gondola and tour may be shared with initial strangers.

For a Shared flight: all as above, but excludes champagne and Moroccan pastries; the transfers, gondola and tour are shared with initial strangers.

OUR PRICES WILL NOT INCLUDE: Accommodation pre & post, nor transfers from/to Marrakech's airport.

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

Personal gear; gratuity to pilot and/or ground crew.

IT IS RECOMMENDED YOU BRING WITH YOU: a woollen sweater for early morning departure and flight; sunglasses; sun block; camera.

An interesting relevant web site to look at: - <http://travel.howstuffworks.com/hot-air-balloon.htm>