The Western High Atlas ranges are some 800km long stretching from the Atlantic coast at Agadir all the way to Tunisia; are from 35 to 110km wide, with 10 summits above 4000m, 50 above 3500m and 400 over 3000m.

12 DAYS/11 NIGHTS OBTTP05a TWO SUMMITS ASCENTS

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: GRADE TWO TO THREE BETWEEN MODERATE AND STRENUOUS IN PARTS. BOOTS REQUIRED.
YOU NEED TO BE CONFIDENT OF YOUR FITNESS, PREFERABLY HAVING HAD SOME PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF HIGH HILL WALKING OR TREKKING AT ALTITUDE AND VARIATIONS IN CLIMATE. AVERAGE PACE PER DAY OF 1km PER HOUR. GPS SUPPORT TEAM. 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.

The months from December through to mid-March could preclude the Toubkal summit climb to those not used to crampons and/or ice axes. Morning fog and heavy snowfalls may also prevent ascent to the Toubkal summit. We shall advise you of adverse climatic conditions and of an alternate col climbs prior to your setting out from Marrakech.

DAY 1: AGADIR - TAROUDANT - ASSIF N’AI’T TAMENT - TAGMOUT - AWSAGHMELT - TIZI N’TARGA FOOTHILLS.
Departure from Agadir around 8 in the morning towards the east alongside the trailing edges of the westernmost High Atlas range to arrive around 9.15 at the pre-Islamic walled town of Tarouddant, also known as “Marrakech in Miniature.” Built in 1030 and once the capital of the Saâdien dynasty – here we meet with our mountain guide and take a quick tour of the town walls and centre - before continuing up to the town of Oulad Brehil. On our way here we shall have an utterly awe-inspiring vista of the Tichka chain, peak after peak after peak. We change our vehicle to an open light truck (camionette) - the sole method of transport, other than 4WD, which can take us up into this virgin (for hikers) region - or continue in our 4WD, depending on the mode of transportation selected - for at least a further 4½ hour drive (in 4WD or 6 hours in light truck), way up into the upper foothills of this savagely magnificent and still virgin range of the Western High Atlas mountains, passing alongside oueds and small reservoirs, through the old Berber hamlet of Zawyyat Iguerzane, past the Oued Tamazirrt and Assif Timeselt Valley and on up through the hairpin piste finally to arrive at the Berber market village of Zawyyat Tafilalt, or Abdellah Ou Said as it is known to its Berber (Chleuh) inhabitants. We shall take a break here for some photographs before continuing up along the piste alongside the valley of the Assif n’Aït Tament onwards on a gruelling, winding ascent, mostly in first gear, for some 1½ hours between the upper slopes of the Ighil Lbour (2108m) and Tizi Ougouni ((1856m), passing by Adrar Tazgoukt (1663) and the High Atlas Berber hamlets of Alagjana and Tazoudot, with their palmeraies and terraced, irrigated fields seeming to cling to the stark mountain slopes, over the oued of the Assif Agounsane until we finally reach the village of Tagmout, resting way up (1910m) in the stark upper foothills of the impressive Tichka Plateau. Once another important stop for the ancient caravans of gold, salt and slaves from Chad, Mali and Mauritania to the Mediterranean coast, here we relax to enjoy our field picnic by the river before setting off on a 2½ hike up the sinuous mule trail of the Upper Medlawa Valley, passing the hardy Mountain Berber hamlets of Tawart and Amghlou and their scattered groves of almond and walnut trees, terraced irrigated fields of barley, corn and potato, by small waterfalls and incredible vistas, up to the last hamlet in this beautiful High Atlas valley - Awsaghmelt (or Imliaouin in Berber) - in the shadow of Ras Moulay Ali (2845m) with its pools of water created by a small waterfall, on between Jbels Askouân (3078m) and Ras Awlim (3048m) to arrive at an âazib at the feet of Tizi n’Targa (2806m), where our bivouac will be set up and our dinner is prepared. LD.

DAY 2: FOOTHILLS TIZI N’TARGA - TIZI N’TARGA - TICHKA PLATEAU. Suitably refreshed, we strike out today for a 3 hour hike up some 92(!) hairpin bends of the faint mule trail to traverse the Tizi at 2900m to picnic at some 3010m close to the Ras Moulay Ali crest, to continue further for another 3 hours along faint winding tracks to finally arrive at our bivouac site on this incredibly romantic and beautiful Tichka Plateau of a Thousand Peaks, a wedge-shaped plateau, rimmed with peaks and precipitous sides where, after getting our breath back, we shall have dinner under a breathtaking canopy of a million stars. BLD.
DAY 3: PLATEAU OF A THOUSAND PEAKS - JABEL IMARADENE SUMMIT - TICHLA PLATEAU. Today we shall enjoy one of the highest mountain walks in the Atlas, many of whose peaks have never been climbed and which, whilst some keep snow caps year round, have no glaciers. The virgin Plateau, with its meadows of early daffodils and alpine flowers in spring, controlled grazing, scattered forests of oak, pine and nut trees of all sorts, strangely green amidst a high altitude landscape and a dramatic panorama of so many peaks and gorges, is an absolute delight. Before breakfast and camp strike, we set out for a 7 hour hike and ridge walk – technically a walk up and down and up and down and up and down and some scrambling over shattered rock - 4 ½ hours in the morning up to the summit of one of the highest peaks in the chain - Imaradene (3351m). From this exposed peak we shall have a spectacular vista and sense of total isolation, with our immediate west Jbels Moulay Ali (3349m), Aquelmoun (3351m), Tanguemd Lma'dene (3251m), Mtdadene (3366m), Amdras n'Fivil (3214m) and Tit Oulli (3247m) – amongst those that have been named. To the north the glorious valleys of the Assifs Ida Gourioun, Isqouqand, Id M'Nssiren, Imi N'Tanout and Samba and the copper mines at Afensou and Aguerasafane; to the east Jbels Wajir Oudadene (3139m), Akalmoumame (2901m), Awrir n'Tidar (2934m), Azrou Azdim (2934m), Amendach (3192m) and on and on. We shall picnic here on the roof of the Atlas world, finally return for about 2 ½ hours down the steep slopes to our dinner and bivouac site on this beautiful and strangely-silent lost world. BLD.

DAY 4: TICHLA PLATEAU - TICHLA VALLEY - AGHBAR VALLEY. After breakfast and camp struck we set out along a flat, easy trail through some beautiful surroundings dotted with walnut and almond trees, cross the Oued N'Fis to reach the hamlet of Mouldikhte and on down through narrow, winding paths surrounded by walnut, almond and olive trees until we reach the point where the Oued N'Fis and Assif Oughdim meet – and where we stop for our picnic amidst some romantic vistas of towering peaks, long, dramatic valleys and swirling clouds. Our hike continues to take us down the valley until we reach Souq Sebt, where we shall stop for our welcome picnic before continuing on winding mule trails to the feet of the Tizi n'Test (2092m), for, after 7 hours of moderate hiking, we relax for our dinner and bivy site for the night. BLD.

DAY 5: AGHBAR VALLEY - AMLOUHL - TIZI N'TEST. From the Valley of Aghbar we hike along a faint trail through some wild and gorgeous countryside, the shady walnut and almond trees on all sides of the rain-denuded upper slopes to come across several Berber hamlets of pisé and stone clawed from the mountainsides until we come to the ancient village of Amlouhl, to be greeted by curious children and the most-hospitable Berber mountain folk. From here we strike out further down the valley until we reach Souq Sebt, where we shall stop for our welcome picnic before continuing on winding mule trails to the feet of the Tizi n'Test (2092m), for, after 7 hours of moderate hiking, we relax for our dinner and bivy site for the night. BLD.

DAY 6: TIZI N'TEST - MOULDIKHTE - OUED N'FIS - TIN-MAL. From our campsite on this upper slope we shall continue to the east, following the Oued N'Fis Valley down to the hamlet of Oukhoune. Once past this quiet, tiny group of pisé homes, we continue on a relatively easy hike along flatter ground down to the hamlet of Moulikhte and on down through narrow, winding paths surrounded by walnut, almond and olive trees until we reach the point where the Oued N'Fis and Assif Oughdim meet – and where we stop for our picnic amidst some romantic vistas of towering peaks, long, dramatic valleys and swirling clouds. Our afternoon is spent hiking up and down the contours of the valley slopes until we reach the historic site of Tin-Mal, alone amidst stark mountains and luxuriant valley vegetation. Here, outside of the mosque, we set up camp after another day of 7 hours' easy hiking to enjoy a well-earned meal. BLD.

DAY 7: TIN-MAL - KASBAH GANDAF GANDAF GANDAF N'YACCOUB - IJOUKAK. This small, remote stronghold settlement, high up on the opposite bank of the river, gives all the appearance of a Lhasa-in-Muslim miniature, set amidst brown slopes, green shrubbery and snow-capped mountains. We are here to visit the historic site, the first one built in the mid 17th century by a servant of the Sultan Caïd Goundafa, the ‘Lord of the Atlas.’ This latter one, rebuilt around 1906, is quite obviously one not used for the defence of the region and served but as a palace and administrative centre for some1200 clerks, servants and slaves – and for a harem of 300 women Most of the upper stories and stairways have collapsed, but we can still amble around the columned prayer-hall and inner courtyard overhung with balconies. We continue on up to Ijoukak, where we shall overnight after a 6 hour hike in a small Gîte d’étape and dine for the night. Close by is a quaint hammam, for those who’d like to enjoy this refreshing – and cleansing – experience! BLD.
DAY 8: IJOUKAK - ALA N’OUM ZORNI - TIZI N’IGUIDI - AM’SSSLANE.  From this village we set out for some 6 hours towards the north-east up and down zigzagging paths through the ever-present walnut and olive trees and now through fields of barley, potato and corn to reach the hamlet of Ala n’Oum Zorni, where we shall stop for our field picnic, prior to continue up to the Tizi n’Iguidi. Once this col has been traversed, we amble down along these sinuous paths through areas of startling beauty to arrive at the village of Am’ssslane, to set up camp and dine for the night. BLD.

DAY 9: AM’SSSLANE - TIZI TAGHDALT - TIZI OUSSEM - TAMSOULT CASCADE - TIZI N’TIKKERT.  Breakfast tucked away and camp struck, we now strike out across the pleasant Am’ssslane Plateau until we reach the Assif Takhint where we shall stop for our picnic around midday. Now we set off for about 1 hour up to the Tizi Taghdaalite, from where we are offered a tremendous panorama of the Takhint and Azzadene Valleys. Once through the col, we cross a zigzagging trail through some pretty countryside to the village of Taghdalite, to cross the Assif Azzadene to reach the village of Tizi Oussem (1850m). From here, between the Jbels Taghmidout (2004m), Aqguelzim (3547m) and Tazaghârât (3843m), we continue south to the Áazib Tamsoult (2145m) and up to the Tamsoult Cascade, also known as the Irhoulidene Cascade (2200m), where we’ll stop for our field picnic. Thence on to the Tizi n’Tikkert for dinner and overnight bivouac at 2900m above the Assif n’Ouarzane Valley. BLD.

DAY 10: TIZI N’TIKKERT - TIZI N’AGUELZIM - TOUBKAL REFUGE.  After breakfast, we now set off for some five to six hours to the south-east on a moderately difficult hike up winding mule trails to the Tizi n’Aguelzim (3104m), to stop for a picnic high up on its slopes, gradually adjusting to the altitude, thence a further 3 hours to the Toubkal (ex-Neltner) Refuge, which marks the spring snowline at 3207m, where we shall have dinner and either bivouac around the mountain hut * or take cover in there for the night. BLD.

DAY 11: TOUBKAL REFUGE - SUMMIT JBEL TOUBKAL - SIDI CHAMHAROUCH - AROUMD - IMLIL.  A very early breakfast to set out around 5am to witness a spectacular sunrise and attain, after a three hour steep climb involving crossing some scree, the highest peak in the Maghreb (4167m). The panorama from here is simply stunning. This remarkable climb and view is what you have come so far for. The first recorded climb of this peak, in 1923, was made by the French mountaineers V. Berger, M. Doubleau and the Marquis de Segonzac; many serious trekkers since then have made the highly rewarding effort. Whenever you are ready, we shall take the Ikhibi Sud or South Cirque for a straightforward – with your guide - 2 to 3 hour descent back to the Refuge for a picnic. Should there be intrepid hikers who prefer to “do” this peak in winter, morning fog and snow levels might preclude reaching the summit. In this event, we shall advise you, prior to setting out from Marrakech, of an alternative peak climb nearby. We shall now set off towards the north along steeply descending, zigzagging trails of the higher slopes of the Valley of the Assif n’Isouhouanem n’Ouarzane towards the Berber village of Sidi Chamharouch. Set beside a waterfall, with its homes surprisingly built one into the other, it is yet another sight to be enjoyed. There is a pilgrimage ‘marabout’ shrine here, probably the remnant of a pre-Islamic culture, but forbidden to non-Muslims and, on leaving the village, we shall notice a tree, sacred to the local Berbers, where they hang strips of coloured cloth and pile up stones as we descend high above the valley of the Assif Mizane, down zigzagging trails around granite and basalt grey rocks for some 8kms to the remarkable village of Aroumd (Aremd) (1840m), built on a spur of rock commanding one of the more fertile valleys of the High Atlas mountains with terraced, irrigated plots and fields of maize, onions and fruit trees on all sides. Here we shall stop for our picnic prior to continuing for another 4kms. along the floor of the valley, thence up a well-defined mule track zigzagging above the river to arrive, finally, by about 5pm., at the Berber village of Imlil (1740m), Morocco’s ‘Little Chamonix,’ with its paths and streams branching off in all directions, to enjoy a glass of mint tea - or two - at the Gîte d’étape of our senior guide for dinner and overnight. BLD.

DAY 12: IMLIL - TIZI N’TAMATERT - AGUERSIOUAL VALLEY - TACHEDDIRT - IMLIL - MARRAKECH.  After breakfast, we shall set out towards the east on a moderate level 6 hour hike up to the Tizi n’ Tamatert (2280m) and on down winding tracks to the Tacheddirt Valley and thence north to the Assif Aguerssioul Valley, where we’ll take our picnic. Thence, a slow, easy hike up to the village of Tacheddirt (2400m), to circle back alongside the lower slopes of the Jebel Aksoulou Range to arrive back at Imlil and our 4.30 transfer back to Marrakech. BL.

retains the right to alter the itinerary in the event of inclement weather on a day-by-day basis should, in the professional opinion of our Senior Guide, the actual route of that day be too risky.

Be prepared for some minimal ablutions - and absolutely no “tourists.” until the Toubkal Massif.

This unique itinerary may start and finish in Marrakech, if so required, with a slight price adjustment for the additional transfer to Tarouddant.
OURS PRICES WILL INCLUDE: Private round trip transportation from Agadir to Taroudant and to and from trailhead by Camionette or 4x4, plus private transportation from Imlil to Marrakech. An experienced licensed bi-lingual mountain guide throughout. 8 nights' accommodation in bivouac; 2 in Gîtes d'étapes 1 night in the Toubkal Refuge. All meals as shown; igloo tents and undermats; cook; pack animals and support team. Medical and Accident Insurance. Clients are always requested to check their own personal travel insurance to see if any adrenaline activities are precluded.

OURS PRICES WILL NOT INCLUDE: Accommodation pre & post, nor transfers from Agadir’s’ airport and to Marrakech’s. Gratuities to guide/muleteers. 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: Stout walking boots (boots which take crampons Nov-Apr 15); changes of socks; sleeping bag (3-4 seasons); windcheaters or duvet jackets (seasonal), slickers, hats, ski hats, balaclavas or ear muffs, gloves (seasonal); rambler pole; personal toiletries and towels; small First Aid kit, thermal underwear (Dec-May); headlamp or torch with batteries; day pack; filled water bottle; sunscreen, nibbles and/or dried fruit. Drinking chocolate if preferred. Camera, trowel and extra toilet rolls could come in handy!

N.B: Meals are normally:-
Breakfast - tea, coffee, milk, bread, butter, jam, cheese, cereal.
Picnic lunch - fresh Moroccan salad, cheese, tinned tuna fish *, bread, fruit, mint tea.
Dinner - Tagine (chicken or mutton *), couscous or spaghetti rotated according to the duration of the trek; bread, coffee, mint tea, cake, fruit. * Those vegetarians or vegans amongst us need to pre-advise at time of reservation.

Reservations involving the 4x4 vehicles need to be made with 2 weeks’ anticipation.

Please ensure, at time of reservation, you advise us of your choice between bivouac or Toubkal Refuge accommodation.

In the event of bivouacking vice overnighting in the Refuge, the price will be reduced per person per night.