


## MOROCCO'S HIGH ATLAS VALLEYS AND RANGES

### MOUNTAIN COUNTRY AND VALLEY HIKES

PRIVATE ANY DAY DEPARTURES

# A STROLL THROUGH TO THE TOUBKAL NATIONAL PARK

3DAYS/2NIGHTS OBTto12m

**LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: GRADE ONE**  WALKING MOSTLY ON MULE PATHS, SOMETIMES ROCKY AND MOSTLY DOWNHILL FOR BETWEEN 4-6 HOURS RAMBLING WITH PHOTO & 'TECH STOPS' EACH DAY. EASY. GOOD TRAINERS WOULD SUFFICE, BUT BRING GOOD BOOTS IF YOU'RE USED TO THEM. SUITABLE FOR MOST HILL WALKERS; YOU NEED TO BE REASONABLY CONFIDENT OF YOUR FITNESS, PREFERABLY HAVING HAD SOME PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF TREKKING. 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.

**DAY 1: OUIRGANE - IMLIL - IMENANE VALLEY - TACHEDDIRT.** Departure from Ouirgane at 9 in the morning for a pleasant drive east to the small Berber market town of Asni, from here to turn south up the pleasant, winding and contrasting Assif Aït Mizane Valley into the foothills of the Western High Atlas ranges and our trailhead in the Berber village of Imlil (1740m), known also as Morocco's 'Little Chamonix'. With paths branching out all around us we set out along a piste for a 1 hour and 45 minutes hike towards the east up to the Tizi n'Tamatert (2272m), on alongside fields of barley and orchards of walnut, apple and cherry trees until we reach the hamlet of Tamatert (1850m). Once through this tiny settlement we shall take a path leading us up through pine and juniper woods. We stop at the Tizi to admire the Imlil and Imenane Valleys, this latter with its many Berber hamlets ("Douars") tucked precariously onto the slopes stretching around us, with Jbel Oukaïmeden (3268m) in the area known locally as "Ouka" on the near horizon. We carry on along the upper valley slopes for another hour or so to the villages of first Ouaneskra and then Amghedoul (2130m), set amidst terraced plots of land carved from the arid slopes, where we shall stop for our field picnic on the plateau used in summer as a favoured bivouac site. Our afternoon will be spent hiking for some 3 hours up through the valley along mule trails until we reach the pretty – and the oldest - Berber village in the Toubkal Massif - Tacheddirt (2291m), set amongst terraced plots clawed from the surrounding craggy slopes, where we'll overnight in a Gîte d'étape. Whilst dinner is being prepared, there's ample opportunity to visit the village and the always-welcoming hardy Berber villagers. **LD.**



**DAY 2: TACHEDDIRT - IAABASSENE - TIMICHCHI.** After an early breakfast we start our 6hour hike south-eastwards to the terraced village of Timichchi (1860m), at the western offshoot head of the Ourika Valley. For 2½ hours we shall hike slowly up to the Tizi n'Tacheddirt (3200m), which affords us a stunning panoramic view of the Jbels Aksouâl (3842m) and Bou Iguenouane (3882m) on one side and Angour (3616m) on the other, with the beginning of the luscious nature of the beautiful, verdant valley stretching out way below us. We shall traverse the pass and continue on down through the rocks north-eastwards for a further 2 hours until we reach the Berber village of Iaabassene (2030m), where we'll stop for our welcome field picnic next to a spring just outside of the village. The afternoon's 2hour hike takes us up further to the northeast down the valley to the old village of Timichchi, a charming terraced pisé conglomeration of homes set amongst ancient nut trees, where we'll have our dinner and overnight in a Berber family's home. **BLD.**



**DAY 3: TIMICHCHI - ISGHOUARNE - AGADIR n'AÏT BOULMANE - SETTI FADMA - OUIRGANE.** After breakfast we set out for a 4 to 5-hour hike eastwards down along the valley full of cornfields and orange groves, with many streams flowing down from the upper slopes, passing through the villages of Isghouarne and Agadir n'Aït Boulmane to arrive at the end of the beautiful Ourika Valley proper and the renowned Berber village of Setti Fadma, with its ancient nut trees and waterfalls. We shall stop for our field picnic just outside of the village, before hiking up some 400m during a further hour to the waterfalls, perchance to see some of the area's Barbary apes before hiking back down the verdant Upper Valley for some 45 minutes to rejoin our vehicle at 3 pm to take us back to Ouirgane. **BL.**



**OUR PRICES WILL INCLUDE:** Private transportation from Ouirgane to trailhead and return. An experienced licensed bi-lingual mountain guide throughout. Gratuity to the Tin-Mal Mosque guardian. Muleteer/cook and equipment. Breakfast – tea, coffee, milk, bread, butter, jam, cheese, porridge or cereal. Picnic lunch – fresh Moroccan salad, cheese, tinned tuna fish \*, bread, fruit, mint tea. Dinner – Tagine (chicken or mutton \*), couscous or spaghetti. \* If **vegetarian or vegan** please pre-advise. Medical and Accident Insurance.

**OUR PRICES WILL NOT INCLUDE:** *Accommodation* pre & post in Marrakech and Ouirgane, nor transfers from/to Marrakech's hotel/riad or airport. Gratuity to guide and muleteer/cook. 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, strong high ankle trainers; rucksack; personal toiletries and towels; hygienic 'Wipes'; filled water bottle; water purification drops – usually iodine; rambler pole (optional); hats; anorak or windcheater (seasonal); sunscreen, sunglasses; binoculars, camera, nibbles.

