


THE MOROCCAN 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 4-6 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.

THE WATERFALLS OF OUM er-RBIA

OBT-FES04 2 - 3 HOURS HIKING. Departure from Fes at around 8.30 in the morning for an exciting 2hours' drive towards the



south and the foothills of the Middle Atlas Ranges After some 30 minutes, we arrive at the small 1920s French-built hill station of Immouzèr Du Kandâr (1220m). Here we may pause for ten minutes by the kasbah for a look at the little medina and take in the pleasant Saiss Plateau and distant Fes, before continuing on to Ifrane, where we shall stop for a short visit of this squeaky-clean Moroccan pseudo-Swiss town of Ifrane (1650m), with its slanted, russet-tiled roofs hidden amidst a forest of cedar, which cannot grow below 1600m. Ifrane is mainly a winter ski resort - and a summer hideaway for rich Moroccans wishing to escape the hustle and heat of the large cities. We shall then drive up alongside the Cedar Forest to the first real town in the Middle Atlas - Azrou - which in the local Tamazight Berber dialect means "rock," for, next to the mosque, is the massive outcrop from which this town takes its name. Azrou was for a long time a strategic settlement established to effect some form of control of the independent mountain Berber peoples. On Tuesdays there is a souq to where the Beni M'Guild tribes, renowned for their intricately-designed carpets, come to trade. From this traditional Amazigh Berber green-tiled roofed market square village we shall drive for about an hour through the Triangle Of Cedars with its troops of Barbary Apes and, subject to the season, myriads of butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies. To our right we shall see the empty plateau, empty, that is, except for the black felt tents of the semi-nomadic Beni M'Guild Berber peoples, with their herds of sheep, goats and dromedaries. We'll continue to a visit of Lake Afenourrir, with its seasonal variety of resident and migratory birds, amongst which can be counted the avocet, heron, stork, grebe, egret and sandpiper; duck, wagtail, sand martin and swallow, bluetit, jay and kite. From here we shall continue south to the volcanic crater lake of Ouiouan which affords us a magnificent panorama of the cedar-topped Sidi M'Guild range (2400m) of the Central Atlas Mountains. Onwards we go to the area of the gorge which produces the 40 springs making up the Oum er-Rbia waterfall. Here we cross the "border" between the Berber tribes of the Beni M'Guild and the Zayan M'Guild, to notice almost immediately a difference in architectural styles. The Beni M'Guild winter homes are built of clay, their summer homes are their black felt tents, whereas the more permanent homes of the Zayan are of cedar wood and slanted zinc roofs. We now start our 2 to 3hour circular hike from the Berber village of Oum er-Rbia, passing by freshwater and mineral springs boiling out from between grey-green boulders, to picnic in the shade of beautiful trees, accompanied by the tinkling waters of a nearby stream and the hammering of the pied and red great woodpeckers. This tree-lined area is a fine spot for some seasonal bird watching, with migratory teal, grebe, coot; woodland finches and titmice; wagtail and warblers; hovering hawks, ravens, red kites, kestrels and the occasional booted eagle. Refreshed, we set out to visit the wonderful waterfalls, thence to swing along the left bank of the stream to cross a little bridge and walk through a park where we shall rejoin our vehicle to take us back to the oldest of all the Imperial Cities.



OUR PRICES WILL INCLUDE: Private round trip transportation Fes - Oum er-Rbia - Fes. An experienced licensed bi-lingual mountain guide throughout. Light field picnic lunch. Medical and Accident Insurance. **FIELD PICNIC LUNCH:** 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 ankle trainers; hats, sunscreen, sunglasses; binoculars, camera and nibbles; filled water bottle. Biscuits to feed the Barbary Apes.