MOROCCO ECLIPSE TREK

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How fit do I need to be?

This trekking challenge is all about **endurance** fitness, rather than speed, and it is certainly not a race. Try to train with your day-pack on your back and get used to drinking and carrying water during your training. Sticking to our training plan will really pay off. You will be up early in the mornings and trekking for approximately 6-8 hours each day, so good fitness is very important. The heat will have an impact on your efforts, and the mountain trails (even when not particularly steep) will feel more tiring. Distances are misleading in this type of terrain, and it's more useful when training to think about the hours you need to walk for! This trek is achievable for most people provided they **train well in advance**.

Keep in mind that this is designed to be a personal or fundraising challenge, and many people will find elements of the trip difficult at times, whether it is the physical trekking, climate, the difference in culture or something else. Try to work as a team and help each other out during any difficulties. While there are challenges, **the enjoyment and rewards that come from trekking in these beautiful mountains are unforgettable**!

What will the trekking be like?

You will be trekking on a mix of dirt trails through forest and open fields or meadow, and dry, rocky tracks. Some sections will be on very straightforward, well-used paths, others may be more uneven with boulders etc. There are plenty of ascents and descents – some are shorter inclines, and some more lengthy and gradual. There are occasional shale and scree sections at higher elevations. There are also some river-crossings. Some sections are sheltered and shaded, others are quite exposed to the weather. If you are unsteady on your feet or suffer knee problems you will find trekking poles invaluable, but do make sure you use these while training. It is likely to be cooler in the mountains.

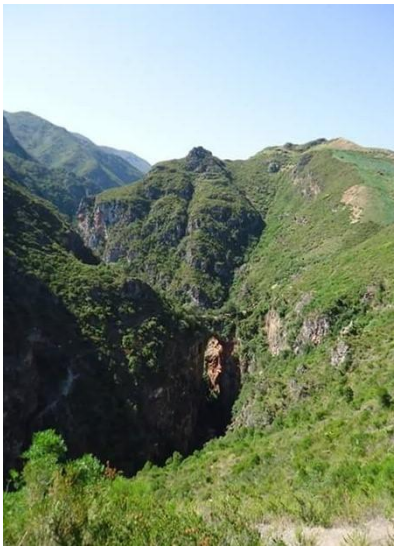
Most of the trek is at elevations lower than 1500m, rising to approx. 2000m for one day only, so we do not anticipate the altitude causing problems.

Who accompanies us on the trek from Discover Adventure?

Your trip will be led by an **experienced Discover Adventure leader**. They usually accompany you from the UK, but may occasionally meet you in-country. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first-aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

Will there be a doctor trekking with us as well?

Depending on group size, an expedition doctor or medic may accompany the group. Our medics are there to provide first aid and promote day-to-day welfare on the trip; they carry a robust medical kit, but cannot possibly be equipped with everything needed to counter any given situation. They also provide crucial support to our leaders and, as they are usually found at the back of our groups, are also experts at encouraging you when things get tough.



Who else will accompany the group on this challenge?

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, drivers, muleteers and cooks. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

What is the accommodation like?

At the start and end of the trek you stay in a good standard hotel (equivalent to 2-3*) on a twin-share basis. If you are travelling alone, you will be paired up with someone of the same sex and similar age – please let us know if you wish to share with a particular person, if you have not already done so. During the trek, you'll stay in mountain gites, which are more basic, as you'd expect from their remote locations. Expect shared facilities and dorm-style rooms in these friendly, characterful gites. If you are only used to staying in nice hotels, be prepared for fairly rustic conditions. Being out of your comfort zone adds to the challenge, and makes your achievement all the sweeter!

Can I request single accommodation?

Single rooms at the hotels at the start and end of the trip are subject to request and at additional cost, on a first-come, first-served basis. However, accommodation in this region around the date of the eclipse will be in great demand, so it is very unlikely that we will be able to obtain extra rooms. In the gites, single accommodation is not feasible due to the communal nature of the mountain huts. Sharing a room is a really good ice-breaker if you don't know anyone else on the trip, so don't worry too much about it!

What are the transport arrangements for the group and our kit?

Private transport, (eg a minibus) will transport you for all transfers during the trek, except for more remote journeys where taxis may be more appropriate.

When trekking, the luggage you need will be driven between accommodation (you will be able to leave items not needed securely at the hotel), and you won't have access to it until the end of each day. You will therefore need to carry a day-pack with trekking essentials (i.e. water, snacks, spare layers, sun-cream, hat, phone, etc.) Ensure you get used to walking with a day-pack with a similar load while training.



What will the weather be like?

Expect a Mediterranean climate, with average temperatures from 18-32°C, though it gets a little cooler higher up. In the summer, the sun can be very strong. Early mornings and evenings can be cooler. Though rain is unlikely, there is always a possibility of a shower, and you should always be prepared. It can be windy on exposed sections. Never underestimate the power of the sun's rays, even when it feels cool, is cloudy or windy. Ensure that you bring at least Factor 30 sun-cream, along with a high SPF lip salve. A sun hat, which covers your neck, and quality sunglasses are also a must.

What will I be eating?

It is amazing what the local crew produce in this environment! The food is **freshly-cooked and plentiful** and it's important you ensure you eat well for the long days of trekking, even if you don't feel as hungry when it's hot. The meals are usually high in carbohydrate content, and you will eat foods like porridge, bread, stews and tagines with couscous. Meat dishes vary, but expect chicken to be fairly frequent. There is always plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Do I need to bring snacks?

Bring enough snacks to keep you going each day - around **3-4 tasty treats a day will suffice**. We recommend a combination of slow and fast release snacks such as cereal bars, flapjacks, salted nuts, and a packet of sweets. Bringing a combination of treats will keep you interested in snacking as consistent energy levels are important.



I have a specific dietary need; will there be enough for me to eat?

Being vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free or having other dietary requirements is usually not a problem provided you **let us know well in advance** (airlines need to know at least 8 weeks prior to the departure). Please do not expect the variety you would have at home – we will be among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help, and in some regions certain foods are hard to access. If you feel you aren't getting enough energy because of your dietary requirements please talk to the leaders on the trip – they can't help unless they know there's a problem. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

How much do I need to drink?

Drink, drink, drink! Due to the nature of the challenge and the heat, you will need to drink significantly more in Morocco than you would trekking in the UK. You will be provided with plenty of drinking water at breakfast for the day ahead, so ensure that you keep your bottles and hydration systems topped up. It's vital that you avoid dehydration. You will need to drink at least 3ltrs of water a day; get used to carrying at least 2ltrs on you when training so you get used to the weight.

Outside of trekking times, you may need to provide your own water and, while sometimes it is unavoidable, we generally discourage buying small bottles of water as this has a higher environmental impact. We strongly recommend you invest in a filtration bottle such as Water-to-Go, which allows you to drink from (eg) hotel taps and airports without concern.

Please follow the link on our Responsible Tourism web-page for more information and a discount code. Even with a filtration bottle, there may obviously be times you need to buy bottled drinks, but it will cut down on plastic waste, and can be used for many DA trips to come!

What about toilets?

Toilet facilities won't be like home. There are rarely toilet facilities during the day, so please be prepared. You will need to take baby wipes, nappy sacks and paper in order to make sure you **leave no trace** whilst out on your trek. These can then be discarded in the nearest bin. The toilet facilities in your accommodation may not be up to the standard that you are used to; please remember that you are in remote, fairly poor regions that are not in typical tourist areas.

What can I do to prevent illness during the challenge?

Though illness can spread through the group very quickly when you are living closely together, especially in hot climates. Bring antiseptic hand sanitiser for use after the toilet and before eating to minimise the spread of germs. Also, avoid sharing water bottles and sharing each other's food or sweets as this spreads germs very easily, even if you are being careful.

On the trip itself, food is cooked and prepared to very high standards and you can eat with confidence. For other meals, we'd advise avoiding salads, raw vegetables and fruit that you cannot peel yourself, as well as unpasteurised dairy products. For the same reason, we recommend not drinking tap water (or cleaning teeth in it), and avoid ice cubes in drinks unless you are sure they are made with bottled/treated water.

There is always a risk of sunstroke and dehydration on a trip of this nature if you are not careful. Drink lots of water, replenish your salt intake and protect yourself against the sun: use high factor sun cream or sun block, wear a hat and sunglasses. The key point for good health is to keep your resistance high – eat and drink well – and to be fully aware of all possible health risks such as poor hygiene, undressed open cuts, untreated water and bites.



Any safety tips for non-trekking time?

One of the benefits of group travel is safety – you all look out for each other, and there's no reason to be alone. Sometimes, however, it's easy to lose concentration in a group. Stay focussed in busy areas such as bus stations and markets. Theft is no more common in Morocco than in most European countries, but you should be on your guard against pick-pockets and bag-slashers, especially in the cities. Take responsibility for yourself and your belongings. Leave valuables behind; you don't need your best jewellery and gadgets on this trip. Be careful at night and avoid walking or getting into taxis alone.

What if I have any issues during the trip?

Our leaders are very experienced and work very hard to ensure your trip runs as smoothly and enjoyably as possible, and we're sure that you'll have a wonderful time. If you do have any concerns or problems during the trip **please talk to the crew and give them the opportunity to explain or rectify things while they are able**. They are all very approachable!

What will happen in the case of an emergency on this challenge?

The crew will have phones or radios as appropriate, extensive medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. If you are feeling unwell on this trek, tell your leaders and listen to their advice as **your health and safety is our top priority**.

Will there be Wi-Fi, phone reception and charging points?

The Wi-Fi in the hotel at the start and the end of the challenge may not be as fast as you're used to at home. There is phone signal and internet access in the mountain gites, but signal is limited on the trail itself. There will be power for charging devices, but this may be limited to communal areas. You may wish to bring your own solar charging device as back-up.

For voltage and plug information in hotel accommodation, see https://www.iec.ch/world-plugs



What currency should I take?

The Moroccan currency is the Dirham, divided into 100 centimes. It can only be obtained in Morocco. Bring Sterling or US dollar cash; both are easy to exchange into local currency in the main towns. Scottish currency is not. Damaged or torn notes are hard to get rid of so try not to accept them. Carry low denomination notes as you will have difficulty obtaining change otherwise.

Away from the main towns, changing money will be difficult and there is little to spend it on. Some credit cards are accepted in larger restaurants, hotels and the occasional shop in the souks. Cash can be withdrawn from ATMs in main cities.

How much money will I need to bring with me?

We usually recommend that you take approx. £100-150 spending money in Sterling, but how much you take depends largely on how much you might want to buy in the way of personal items, drinks and souvenirs; you will not need much on the trek itself. You can change money on arrival; £20 is usually plenty for the trek, and you can tip in sterling. Once back in Chefchaouen, you will be able to change further money. You will need to allow approximately £30-40 for the meals not included as part of your itinerary. Do make sure you spend any spare dirhams before you go through security at the airport.

If for reasons due to fitness, illness or any unforeseen circumstances, you have to **depart from the group arrangements**, you must ensure that you have enough funds to cover any resultant costs – for example, extra hotel accommodation or meals. Some of these may be recoverable through your travel insurance, depending on your cover and the circumstances.

What do you recommend for crew tips?



The local guides and crew work incredibly hard and we show our appreciation in the form of a tip. The recommended guideline is £**30-40 per participant** (or equivalent in local currency), dependent on group size, which is split out between the local crew, but this is of course at your discretion. Your trip leader will give you further advice.

Please do not give out individual tips to any crew who you feel have helped you personally, as they work well as a team and those out of sight will be working just as hard as those with you on the trek. Please do feel free to give away any unwanted kit on the last trekking day to the local crew.

Are there many shopping opportunities?

There are plenty of markets and shops selling souvenirs and crafts. Many market sellers will expect you to haggle over price. Haggling is great fun, and a good way of interacting with local people. A good rule of thumb is to offer half of the asking price and meet somewhere in the middle. However, while the intention is to knock the price down, be aware that if the sellers are desperate for immediate cash they will sell at a loss. So do not drive too hard a bargain; remember that £1 means a lot more to the seller than it will to you once you get home.

How do I ensure I'm sensitive to the local culture?

At Discover Adventure we expect our groups to be sensitive to other cultures – be especially respectful in public areas and near places of worship, but also remember that even in the most remote locations, we have local crew with us and they deserve your respect. Remember that what you would wear on a hot day in the UK is not necessarily acceptable in other countries, particularly in Muslim regions. Women are advised to avoid tight or strappy tops in favour of regular T-shirts; men should wear a top at all times. Avoid short shorts; knee-length, or loose trousers are preferable in rural areas. By dressing thoughtfully, you not only experience minimum hassle but do not offend the local people; many of our trips rely on these small communities.

Try to research a little about the culture before you go, or learn a few basic phrases; it all goes a long way to ensuring you connect with local people in a positive way. Thanks in advance for helping to maintain the good reputation of Discover Adventure groups.

What do I need to bring?



Refer to your **Kit List** to ensure that you have all the clothing and kit you'll need for this trip. Our advice factors in the range of weather conditions you may encounter; you may not end up using all of it, but being prepared is vital. Despite that, try to travel as lightly as possible; for example, cut down by taking small bottles of toiletries and half a pack of wet wipes. Having spare layers is important, but having fresh clothes every day is an unnecessary luxury. Doing a practice pack/weighing your bags before you leave home is very beneficial to make sure you haven't over-packed.

When will we know the flight details and meeting point?

Discover Adventure will usually confirm the main group flight details approx. 6 weeks prior to the trip departure so you will know which airport you are travelling from and can arrange suitable transport. You will receive your **Final Joining Instructions** in the month prior to the trip departure date, within which specific details of **where and when to meet your trip leader** and fellow trekking participants will be confirmed.

Can I make my own flight arrangements or alter my flight from the main group?

Flights are included on this trip and you will automatically be booked on to the main group flights, unless you let us know otherwise in good time (no later than three months prior to the trip departure). It is possible to make your own flight arrangements; a land-only discount will be applied. See the **Flight Arrangements Form** in your Passenger Portal.

It is also possible to extend your stay and deviate from the main group flight booking (fee applies); again, see the form. Note that you will remain on the same flight path returning from the same airport. There is sometimes a supplement to pay if the flights are more expensive on your requested day; early requests have the best chance of avoiding this. We will always contact you if this is the case to check whether you are happy to proceed. If you are keen to upgrade your flight, this may be possible at a supplement and you can contact us for an approximate price but please note that this is often very expensive and we will require full payment upfront.

Will I need my flight ticket before the trip departure date?

Unless specified otherwise, you do not need to have your flight ticket prior to trip departure as this will be given to you by the trip leader or a Discover Adventure representative at the airport.

Do I need travel insurance?

As part of your booking conditions, it is **compulsory that you ensure you have adequate travel insurance cover** to cover you for trekking. See the insurance page on our website for further information.

What if this trip does not meet minimum numbers?

Every group needs a minimum number of bookings for it to be feasible to run. As this is a special departure with limited spaces, we do not anticipate a lack of demand. If we are concerned about the group size, you will be contacted in plenty of time and we will discuss options with you – but we will do our utmost to avoid this being a problem.

What is the luggage allowance?

Your main luggage limit on the plane is 20kg with a 5kg allowance for hand luggage. Stick to the Kitlist and you shouldn't be anywhere near that limit. Don't forget that suitcases are not suitable, soft rucksacks/kitbags only so they can be fitted into our support vehicles. Wheels are at your own risk. You should be able to handle your bag yourself as you may need to go up and down steps. Discover Adventure Kitbags are specially designed for the rigours of our challenges and are very affordable. See further details in your Portal.

What time does the eclipse take place?

Maximum totality – where the sun is completely covered by the moon – is expected at 09:44, and will last for around 4-5 minutes. The entire eclipse event, from start of partial eclipse to end of partial eclipse, will last approximately 2.5-3 hours, depending on exact location.

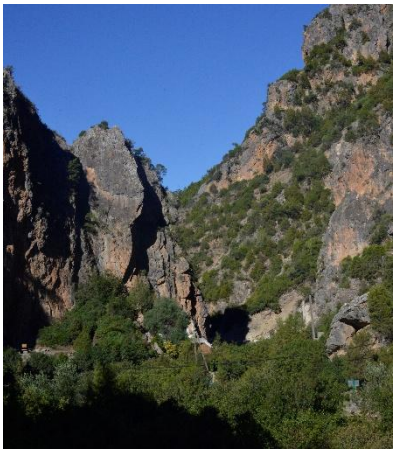
Northern Morocco is one of the few land-based locations in the path of totality and, due to its relatively stable weather patterns and low levels of light pollution, is expected to provide a very good viewing experience.



Are clear skies guaranteed?

No weather is ever guaranteed, but as there is usually very little rain in this area in late July / August, there is a very good chance of clear skies. Our local crew know the area well, so will provide us with the best chance of witnessing the event from a great location.

What are the passport and visa requirements?



A valid 10-year passport is essential; we recommend it has least six months remaining before expiry. British passport-holders do not currently require a visa. UK nationals should refer to the foreign travel advice given here for more information. All other nationalities are responsible for checking entry requirements with their own embassies or consulates for the latest information. Please do so in good time. You will be asked to fill in an immigration form on arrival, so please keep the information given to you at the airport by your leader, which will include your hotel details.

Do check the FCO Entry Requirements information carefully, as regulations can and do change without warning.

How can I find out more about the requirement for vaccinations?

You will need to ensure that you have the vaccinations required for this trip prior to travel. We recommend you ensure your routine UK schedule of vaccinations is up-to-date (especially Tetanus) and check the NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro website for further guidance and information. Always consult your local GP or travel clinic for the latest health advice, as they are aware of any updates in World Health Travel requirements.

Malaria is not a risk in Morocco, but there are still mosquitos and other biting insects which may carry disease. Try to prevent bites by covering up at dawn and dusk in loose-fitting clothing, using a good insect repellent, and avoid wearing strongly perfumed toiletries.