

NEW YEAR SAHARA TREK

29 December - 3 January 2025



Ring in the New Year
and welcome 2025
under the desert sky!



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New Year's Eve in the Sahara

29 December 2024 – 3 January 2025



Trip overview

The Trek

Welcome in the new year by spending it under the stars of the Saharan sky. This trek in the Moroccan Sahara gives you an insight into this vast and diverse landscape as well as the Berber way of life. You will spend two full days and two half days trekking across ancient dried-up river beds, sand dunes, and vast sun-baked plains. Camping each night gives you a chance to experience the stunning stars in the night sky (weather permitting) and the traditional Berber cuisine cooked by the team is second to none. After the first full day of trekking, gather together around the campfire and see in the New Year with good food and the sound of Auld Lang Syne.

Morocco

Situated in North West Africa, the Kingdom of Morocco is a country with a population of over 35 million people. Morocco has a diverse geography with both Atlantic and Mediterranean coastlines in addition to a rugged mountainous and desert interior. The mighty Atlas Mountains and the vast Sahara Desert make Morocco an adventure lover's paradise, and Marrakech is a wonderful place to visit with its spicy aromas, peaceful mosques, diverse entertainers, and a cacophony of merchants in the bustling medina.

Sahara

The Sahara covers an area of over 3,600,000 square miles making it the third-largest desert on the planet (after Antarctica and the Arctic respectively). It stretches from the Mediterranean and Atlantic to the north, the Red Sea to the east, and as far south as the Niger River. The Sahara is the world's hottest desert with record temperatures exceeding 50°C. Despite its inhospitable conditions, the Sahara has many species of flora such as acacia, palms, and grass which have adapted to the arid conditions.

Berbers

The Berbers (or Amazighen – 'free people') are an ethnic group indigenous to North Africa whose culture can be traced back over 4,000 years. Traditionally, Berber men take care of livestock and Berber women take care of the home and make handicrafts for use around the home and to sell. The lifestyle is



generally nomadic or semi-nomadic and there are large Berber communities in the rural parts of the country.

What is the experience like?

Who accompanies us?

You will be accompanied by professional English-speaking Berber guides who have an excellent knowledge of culture and hiking in the region. The guides are first-aid trained and will support you throughout your journey. You will also be accompanied by a team of support staff including cooks and camel handlers, and a Different Travel Company UK tour manager.

How tough is it?

The trek is rated moderately challenging for someone of a good fitness level. The terrain is a mixture of hard, flat sundried plains, dried-up ancient riverbeds, wide sandy dune fields, and hard rocky outcrops. Temperatures, although lower at this time of year, can pose a challenge. You must be of a good fitness level before departure, to ensure fast recovery each day.

What is the climate like?

Temperatures can range from 18°C to 20°C during the day and drop to around 0°C at night however you must be prepared for variations to this which are out of our control. Weather during the trek will be dry but there may be some strong winds. Rain, although very rare, is not impossible. Please note: the temperatures and conditions above are historically accurate but climate change can impact the seasons so you may experience uncharacteristic conditions during the trip which are out of our control. The guides will assess the situation and make decisions to ensure the best enjoyment and safety of the group.

How do we get to the desert?

To get to and from the desert requires long drives (approx. 9 hours including breaks) along winding mountain roads which offer stunning views of the snow-capped peaks and lush valleys. If you suffer from motion sickness you are advised to bring your usual anti-nausea medication with you. Regular stops are taken.

What is the camping like?

During the trek, you will sleep in tents (two to a tent), or if the weather is good you can sleep outside under the stars; highly recommended! Foam sleeping mats are provided but you will need to bring a sleeping bag. Toilet facilities consist of a small toilet 'tent' covering a hole in the ground. There are no showers or bathing facilities in the desert so you must bring a pack of baby wipes.

What is the food like?

During the trek meals are cooked by a chef who will prepare Moroccan dishes. Breakfast and lunch will be eaten alfresco, and evening meals will be in a mess tent at camp. Plates, mugs, cutlery, and other equipment are provided. While staying in Marrakech (and Ouarzazate if applicable) meals will be at the hotel or local restaurants.

Practical information

Who can take part?

The minimum age is 18. It may be possible to participate if you are 16 or 17 years old but you must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. There is no upper age limit. The ideal candidate would be fit, healthy and determined, open to adventure, and adaptable to unexpected changes.

Medical Declaration

We require a medical form to be completed by everyone upon registering, and any pre-existing conditions, medications used and other medical issues must be specified. All your medical details are treated in the strictest confidence.

The information will be securely screened by a qualified medical professional, and details provided to your tour manager and local guides so our staff are adequately informed and prepared to support you during the trip. By completing our booking form you are giving consent for us to contact you confidentially with any follow-up questions regarding your health.

If you declare any medical conditions you may be asked to provide more information, or we may request to contact your GP.

If your medical issues at the time of booking represent a concern for your safety and wellbeing or the safety and wellbeing of others in the group, you may be recommended not to take part. If this happens your booking will not be confirmed and the deposit will be refunded.

We must be informed if any conditions or medication change, or if new conditions develop. If necessary confirmation of fitness to travel from your GP or specialist may be required.

Please note that we will never unreasonably deny participation on a trip nor contravene the Equality Act 2010.

Covid-19

Your health and safety are our top priority so rest assured that we are taking steps to ensure you not only have a memorable experience, but a safe one too.

We constantly monitor and follow the advice of the British Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) who provide recommendations and advice to British travellers about travel to a certain destination.

Health and safety is our top priority so we will **NEVER** operate a trip in an area where there is clear and present risk to our team members, whether that is due to a health outbreak, political instability, natural disasters, or anything else.

If travel restrictions either in the UK or Morocco prevent safe travel we will look to either postpone or cancel your trip at no cost to you.

Please note that at the time of travel, there may be enhanced safety and security measures in airports, bag drop may take longer, and you may need to provide a certificate of health or proof of vaccination. We will inform you about any information pertinent to your travel arrangements.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at info@different-travel.com.



Trip cost

A non-refundable £375 registration fee is payable at the time of booking.

You then have the following options to pay your remaining trip cost balance:

1. **Self-funded***: You pay your own trip cost balance of £975 by 18 October 2024.
2. **Sponsorship**: You fundraise £1,950 by 4 October 2024 for your chosen charity. This includes your £975 tour costs balance *and* a £975 donation to charity.
3. **Flexi**: You pay your £975 trip costs yourself by 4 October 2024 and also fundraise £975 for a charity of your choice. Any fundraising cannot be used to pay for your trip costs.

*If selecting the self-funded option you are welcome to fundraise separately for any charity of your choice but this is not mandatory. Any fundraising undertaken cannot be used for your trip costs.

What is included?

- ✓ Return flights from London (inc. current taxes and fuel surcharges),
- ✓ Transfers and transport in Morocco
- ✓ Accommodation in hotels (2 nights)
- ✓ Tents and sleeping mats on trek (3 nights)
- ✓ All meals as specified
- ✓ Local guides, camels, and camel handlers on trek
- ✓ Different Travel UK tour manager.

What is excluded?

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Tips (£30-35pp)
- ✗ Personal expenses (e.g. drinks, souvenirs, etc.)
- ✗ Vaccinations



Itinerary

Day 1 (Sunday 29 December 2024): London - Marrakech

Depart London for Marrakech. Depending on flight times we will transfer to a central hotel for the night or begin the journey to the desert, stopping for an overnight stay in a hotel at Ouazazarte.

Overnight: Hotel

Meals: Dinner



Day 2 (Monday 30 December 2024): Marrakech - Oulaid Driss - Sahara

An early start for our journey along ancient caravan routes and into the arid scenery of the Sahara desert, stopping for a picnic lunch en route. Later this afternoon you will meet up with your trekking team, consisting of local Berber guides and their camels, and start the trek. Overnight under the stars in bivouacs (or tents weather permitting).

Overnight: Camping

Approx. trek distance: 5km

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner



Days 3–4 (Tuesday 31st December 2024 – Wednesday 1st January 2025):

Sahara Desert

Spend 2 complete days out in the Sahara, and experience a completely different, peaceful, and off-grid New Year's Eve, with your fellow trekkers, and the camels under the amazing night sky! With only your other trekkers and the support team for the company, each day you will walk at the pace of the camels, passing dunes, the occasional oasis, and mile after mile of natural beauty, a million miles away from daily life in the UK! Each night camp is set up under the stars. *Overnight: Camping*

Approx. trek distance: 15-20km

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 5 (Thursday 2nd January 2025): Sahara - Oulaid Driss - Marrakech

This morning it's the final leg of the trek to the small village where we bid farewell to the trek team and head back to Marrakech (approx. 8 hours' drive). This evening we will gather together for a farewell dinner at a traditional restaurant.

Overnight: Hotel

Approx. trek distance: 5km.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 6 (Friday 3rd January 2025): Marrakech - London

Depending on the return flight times, spend time exploring Marrakech before the transfer to the airport for the return flight to London.

Meals: Breakfast

N.B. This itinerary may change due to weather, the ability of the group, and so on. We will do our best to keep to the itinerary but we cannot be held responsible for changes outside of our control. In all circumstances, your guide and tour leader will have the final say in the interest of health and safety.

KIT LIST - SAHARA TREK

The kit you take can make the difference between being 'just a trek' or a 'memorable trek'.

Our kit lists are put together with feedback from our own experiences and those of participants who have taken part in our previous trips.

The items on this list do not take into account your personal preferences based on your previous experiences, or individual requirements.

PLEASE NOTE: This list is just a guideline and is not exhaustive or take into account personal preferences.

For information about items on this list please refer to the trip dossier or contact The Different Travel Company on info@different-travel.com

ESSENTIAL	SUGGESTED	OPTIONAL
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DOCUMENTS + FLIGHT ESSENTIALS	✓
Passport and Copy	
E-Tickets	
Travel insurance	
ATM and credit card (s)	
Cash (£ Sterling)	
Pen for immigration forms	
Sunglasses (preferably polarized)	
Mobile phone + charger	
Camera + spare batteries	

LUGGAGE	✓
Suitcase/large holdall	
Daypack (25 – 30 litres)	
Hand Luggage (take note of dimensions from airline)	
Combination padlocks	

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR	✓
Trekking boots: either worn on flight or carried in hand luggage	
Lightweight trek trousers (zip off trousers ideal)	
Non-cotton, technical t-shirts	
Non-cotton long sleeved top/shirt	
Trek socks	
Warm fleece or sweater (for evening and morning)	
Thermal top and trousers for sleeping	
Sun hat with brim (a cheche can be bought en-route to the desert)	
Warm hat for night	
Sandals for camp	
Neck cooling 'Cobber' or cooling towel	
Buff (www.buffwear.co.uk)	
Gaiters (for the sand and will help stop blisters)	

HEALTH AND HYGIENE*	✓
Hygiene kit to include: toothbrush and toothpaste, antiperspirant deodorant, wet wipes, shampoo, conditioner	
Personal first aid kit to include: prescription medicine, insect repellent, ibuprofen, paracetamol, plasters, blister plasters (e.g. Compeed), Imodium, rehydration salts (Dioralyte), antiseptic cream (e.g. Savlon), Anti-histamine cream/tablets, lip balm with SPF protection, zinc oxide tape, nail scissors/tweezers, muscle rub (e.g. Deep Heat)	
Hairbrush/comb	
Lateral flow tests (min x2)	
Disposable masks	
Feminine care products	

OTHER KIT	✓
Sleeping bag (comfort 0°C)	
Sleeping bag liner (cotton/silk)	
Sun block (high SPF)	
Toilet bag: toilet paper, wipes, hand sanitiser, nappy sacks	
2 ltr water hydration system (e.g. Camelbak)	
1 ltr bottle of water	
LED head torch + spare batteries	
Adaptor (European 2 round pin)	
Ear plugs	
Casual shoes for Marrakech	
Casual clothing for Marrakech	
Hiking poles – to be stowed in hold luggage for flight	
Energy food/snack bars	
Swimwear for hotel	
Bags for dirty washing	
Spare glasses/contact lenses	
Video camera + charger	
MP3 player/ipod	
Portable power bank	
Books/packs of cards	
Travel pillow	