

# SAHARA MINI ADVENTURE

## 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. Although the desert is fairly flat, the heat will have an impact on your fitness levels and your endurance, and the loose sand on parts of the trek can be tiring to walk over. You will be up early in the mornings and trekking for approximately 6-8 hours each day so good fitness is very important. 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 a **challenge** and many people will find elements of the trip difficult at times, whether it is the physical trekking, changing weather, the difference in culture or something else. It is great if you can 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 the Sahara Desert are nothing short of majestic!**

### What will the trekking be like?

You will be trekking over stony, firm desert floor (*hamada*) and loose soft sand dunes, through remote desert and the occasional small oasis. Try to train on a variety of terrain to get your legs used to the challenge of uneven ground. If you are unsteady on your feet you will find trekking poles useful but do make sure you use these when training. You will trek approximately 40km (24 miles) overall, although distances can vary over time because of the natural movement of the dunes. It's much more useful when training to think about the hours that you will be walking for, rather than the distance. The heat adds to the challenge! This may be an entry-level challenge trek but it's still designed to be challenging!

### What is the accommodation like?

At the start and end of the trek you stay in a good standard hotel (2-3\*) – clean and comfortable with en suite facilities, 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.

Whilst on the trek itself you'll be sleeping in large communal tents which sleep between 6-8 people. Being out of your comfort zone adds to the challenge and makes your achievement all the sweeter. We highly recommend sleeping under the incredible star-strewn night skies for at least one night – there's nothing quite like it!

### Can I request single accommodation?

There may be a limited number of single rooms in the hotels at the start and end of the trip, subject to request and at an additional cost, on a first-come, first-served basis. During the trek itself, single supplements are not feasible due to the communal nature of the tents. 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!

### Who accompanies us on the trek from Discover Adventure?

Your trip will be led by **experienced Discover Adventure leaders**. 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.



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## 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 Berber guides, a small caravan of camels, drivers 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. The remote night-camps with camp-fires and Berber singing are often a real highlight of the trip!

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

When you arrive in Morocco you will travel on a coach or minibus, depending on the group size, which will take you to the start and the end of the trek. Your luggage will be transported each day by our **caravan of camels** as you trek, so you therefore cannot access your main packs during the day and will need to make sure that you carry a day-pack containing extra layers, waterproof, sun-cream, hat, camera, water and so on.

## What will the weather be like?

The days are usually clear and sunny and temperatures can exceed 35°C (95°F). Never underestimate the power of the sun's rays, even when it feels cool, is cloudy or windy. It's very easy to get burnt calves or backs of arms so do cover up and ensure that you bring minimum Factor 30 sun-cream (preferably higher) along with a high SPF lip salve. A sun hat which covers your neck, and quality sunglasses are also a must. You'll be able to buy a traditional shamla (desert scarf) on your way to the start of your trek. It is cooler in the mornings and evenings; the temperature drops noticeably as soon as the sun sets. There may even be frost on the tents some mornings. It can rain in this part of the desert.

## What will I be eating?

It is amazing what the local crew produce in this environment, the food is freshly-cooked and plentiful so it is important that you make sure you are eating well for the long days of trekking. Breakfast is usually porridge, bread, fig jam, honey, cheese, tea and coffee. For lunch you will have bread, salads, cheese, olives, fish, vegetables and fruit. Dinners typically start with soup, followed by couscous or tagine with chicken and vegetables, and tinned fruit or other desserts. There will also be biscuits and dried fruit (typically dates or figs), and plenty of mint tea.

## 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.



## Do I need to bring snacks?

Bring a few snacks to keep you going – you shouldn't need more than **1-2 tasty treats a day**. We recommend a combination of slow and fast release snacks such as cereal bars (e.g. Tracker), 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.



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## How much do I need to drink?

**Drink, drink, drink!** Due to the nature of the challenge and the hot and humid climate, you will need to drink significantly more in Morocco than you would trekking in the UK. You will be provided with plenty of bottled water at breakfast for the day ahead, lunch, and in the evenings at dinner, so ensure that you keep topping up your bottles and hydration systems. You will sweat a lot; bring plenty of rehydration sachets. You will need to drink at least 2-3ltrs (70 – 105oz) of water a day, and you will be carrying this in your day packs so try and get used to trekking with that amount of weight when training.

## What is the celebration meal?

At the end of your challenge, there will be a special meal to celebrate your achievements. Please check your trip itinerary to confirm whether you will need to set aside funds to pay for this on the night. Alcohol is not served at this venue, but can be purchased in advance from an off-license if you wish; discretion is required, so please check with your leader.

## What about toilets?

Toilet facilities won't be like home. There are no toilet facilities during the trekking days, 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. In camp our toilet tents are erected for us; expect well-dug long-drops with scenic views! The toilet facilities in your accommodation will be of the standard you would expect in tourist hotels, though if you stop in cafés en route they may be more basic, or French-style squat toilets.

## What can I do to prevent illness during the challenge?

Illness can spread through the group very quickly when you are living closely together so it's important to 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.



## 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 an emergency satellite phone, 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.

## 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. Participants residing in the UK can purchase insurance through our website with Insure2Travel via [this link](#); otherwise you are able to source your own preferred cover with a company of your choosing.

## What if this trip does not meet minimum numbers?

Every group needs a minimum number of bookings for it to be feasible to run. Cancelling a trip is rare, and we do our utmost to avoid it. You will be contacted in plenty of time if we are concerned about the group size, and we will discuss options with you.



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## How much money will I need to bring with me?

How much spending money 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 will be able to exchange the equivalent of approx. £20 (\$25-30) on arrival in Morocco which is plenty of money for the challenge itself. Out of your spending money, you will need to **set aside money** for the meals not included as part of your itinerary, and crew tips – which can be given in sterling or dollars. Once back at your hotel, you will be able to change further money. Do make sure you spend it before you go through security at the airport as you cannot spend dirham when you are through to the departure lounge area.

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 crew work incredibly hard and it is great if we can 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 your used or unwanted kit on the last trekking day as the Berber team is always grateful for extra kit.

## 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 and there is unlikely to be internet access when on the trek itself. The phone reception will be limited and there won't be access to power for charging devices until back at the hotel. You may wish to bring your own solar charging device. Treat this challenge like a '**Digital Detox**' and tell your relatives that no news is good news, as the leader will have a satellite phone for emergencies only.

## When will we know the flight details and meeting point?

Discover Adventure will usually confirm the main group flight details 5 months prior to the trip departure so you will know which airport you are travelling from and can arrange suitable transport. You will be sent 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 and a land-only discount will be applied when you return the '**Flight Arrangements Form**' (sent at the time of booking). It is also possible to extend your stay and deviate from the main group flight booking (fee applies); you will also need to return the 'Flight Arrangements Form' with your request. 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.



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## 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 the trip departure date as this will be given to you by the trip leader or a Discover Adventure representative at the airport. If there are alternative plans, your Challenge Co-ordinator will inform you.

## What do I need to bring?

Refer to the **Kit List** sent to you to ensure that you have all the essentials for a comfortable trip. Make sure your walking boots are lightweight, waterproof (it can rain in the desert) and well-worn in. You may also wish to bring some foot powder with you to absorb sweat and help to prevent blisters. Trekking tops of a wicking nature will be more comfortable to walk in than cotton. If you intend to trek with poles, ensure that you train with them. Don't forget your charity t-shirt too! If you are still to buy some kit don't forget that Cotswold Outdoor, Snow and Rock, Cycle Surgery and Runners Need offer all Discover Adventure participants **15% off** any purchases you make with them. Please ask us for the code if you do not have this already.

## What is the luggage allowance?

Your main luggage limit on the plane is **20kg (44lbs)** with a **5kg (11lbs)** allowance for hand luggage. Do travel lightly and take only small bottles of toiletries. If you stick to the kit list you will manage this with no problems and don't forget that suitcases are not suitable – **soft rucksacks/kitbags only** (with no wheels on) so they are suitable to be loaded onto the camels. Discover Adventure Kitbags are specially designed for the rigours of our challenges and are very affordable, please ask for details.

## Do I need to carry my own luggage?

You will need to carry a day-pack with your trekking essentials (i.e. water, spare layers, waterproof, sun-cream, hat, camera, snacks) as you will not have access to your main bags until the end of each day. Ensure you get used to walking with a day-pack with a similar load while training.

## What are the passport and visa requirements?

A valid 10-year passport is essential; with at least six months remaining before expiry.

There are **no visas required for Morocco for UK nationals currently**, you can refer to the foreign travel advice [given here](#) for more information if you would like to. If you do not have a UK passport, it is your responsibility to check the entry requirements with your own embassy, so please do so in good time. You will be asked to fill in an immigration form on arrival in Ouarzazate so please keep the information given to you at the airport by your leader which will include your hotel details.

## 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. You can find some guidance and information on the [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](#) website. 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.

## Passenger Portal

We have a **Passenger Portal** which will enable you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).

## Download the app!



We use the **VAMOOS travel app** that can be downloaded from the App store to your smartphone. The app can be used offline, and allows you to access all of your challenge documents from your phone. Just download the app and enter the unique code at the prompt (**please ask if you do not have it**).



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