



Sahara Desert Trek

16 - 25 Mar 2019
Open Charity Challenge



Challenge Highlights

A 6 day tented trek into the vast, remote and hot Sahara Desert to witness the sun set from the 580m high Erg Zaher, the largest dune in the region

Wild camping under the stars amongst the magnificent dunes of Chigaga

Experience the minimalist existence and solitude of nomadic desert life

Suitable for experienced adventurers and those looking for their first challenge

A wonderful 10 day adventure includes driving across the High Atlas Mountains

Explore the ancient city of Marrakech - voted world's best destination 2015



Fast Facts

Destination	Morocco
Difficulty	General
Altitude	Negligible
Trip Duration	10 days UK ~ UK
Nights on Trek	5 nights
Nights in Hotels	4 nights
Meals	All meals (and water) on trek, B&B in hotels



Sahara Desert Charity Challenge

Join us on this superb trekking adventure challenge taking you deep into the biggest desert in the world, the Sahara. As you journey across the rolling dunes, following routes used for centuries by Bedouins and camel caravans, you will be captivated by your extraordinary surroundings.

Our route will allow you to fully experience this beautiful region as you traverse hamada, twisting wadi's and untouched windblown sand dunes. We immerse ourselves in desert life as we encounter deserted villages and deep water wells frequented by nomads along the way.

The highlight of your trek is reached at our furthest point from civilization. Hovering on the horizon you will have seen Erg Zaher for a couple of days before you reach it. You will climb this 300m dune, towering majestically over the dunes of the Chigaga region to watch the sun set and for most people, this is a moment to reflect on the purpose of your challenge and your amazing achievement.

During the day we stop for leisurely lunches in the shade of the tamarisk trees and as the sun sets, we gather together to share a Moroccan feast, the quality of which will amaze you.

At night you will wild camp amongst the sand dunes and as we will be far away from the noise and lights of the nearest town, you will witness the desert's peaceful night sky which glistens with far-away constellations, shooting stars and orbiting satellites.

The solitude and freedom of the desert can be life changing and the minimalist existence is both liberating and humbling as your everyday life back home feels a million miles away. By the time you finish, it will be hard to leave the desert behind but with a rewarding sense of achievement, you will take home some very special memories.

Your journey starts and ends in the colourful and captivating city of Marrakech where you will have time to explore the famous Djema El Fna, Marrakech's main square and the endless maze of markets in the Medina. Your adventure starts before you even reach the desert as you will cross the High Atlas Mountains via the Tichka Pass (2260m), the highest road pass in Morocco by private mini bus, and enjoy an overnight stop in Ouarzazate en-route.

To sum up the challenge...

6 days trekking deep into the Sahara dunes with very few home comforts, basic living conditions and a real sense of isolation!



Why choose our Sahara Desert Charity Challenge?

No supplements of fuel charges

Our trip costs include all your flights related costs so you won't have to cover an unknown additional cost at a later date.

Early Guarantee Status

Our challenges are guaranteed to run once we receive bookings from between 2 and 6 people depending upon the trip. This means you can fundraise safe in the knowledge that your trip will go ahead and not be cancelled due to low numbers at the last minute.

Low Minimum Number

Our trips are perfect for solo travellers wishing to book on their own to join a trip which is guaranteed at an early stage. Low Minimum numbers enables small pre-formed groups to tailor their trek to suit particular dates as opposed to joining a fixed group, and without incurring high additional charges.

Route through Marrakech

All of our trips to Morocco use Marrakesh as the hub. It is a reliable flight destination with numerous options of flight carriers and therefore has a high degree of flexibility and resilience.

Flexible and Resilient itinerary

This is adventure travel and there can be numerous reasons beyond our control that can alter the intended plan. Our itineraries are sufficiently flexible and resilient to withstand a good deal of adjustments and still retain the aim.

Challenging but Safe

Weather conditions can often make our trips more challenging. There is a fine line between challenging and unsafe and we take pride in the experience of our Guides to make the right decisions combined with the support we have in place.

Qualified English Speaking Local Guides

We employ our local guides full time and we ensure that their training, including first aid, is renewed regularly. They know what they're doing, loved by our clients and they love their jobs.... and it shows!

No supplements to extend

If you wish to extend your trip in Morocco, we do not charge admin fees for using different departure and/or return flight dates. We're also happy to help you arrange your extended break.

All Meals and Water Included on Trek

All meals on trek are freshly prepared for you by our experienced chef. All dietary requirements can be catered for including Vegan and Gluten free - just let us know. Bottled mineral water will be provided daily for you to decant and carry as required.

Peace of Mind

All our trips have full ATOL protection. See the last page for full details.



Itinerary

Day 1. Depart UK, fly to Marrakesh

For Land Only packages, your trip starts on arrival at the Group Hotel (details supplied) in Marrakesh.

Fly from London to Marrakesh. On arrival in Marrakesh, you will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel/Riad. Once you have settled in and after your Guide briefing, you will want to experience the famous Djemaa el Fna square. Your first experience of the square is one of a senses explosion; entertainers performing, a myriad of food stalls all lit up with the smells to accompany them, and the general melee of activity.

Day 2. Drive Marrakesh to Ouarzazate

After breakfast, your journey down to the Desert begins. You will drive over High Atlas mountains, potentially experiencing snow at the higher altitudes demonstrating the vast difference between the country's high and low points and stunning scenery. The 5hr journey will be broken with a rest stop as well as a visit to Ait Ben Haddou. This is the filming location for much of the blockbuster 'Gladiator' as well as 'Game of Thrones'.

Your overnight stop is in the desert town of Ouarzazate. Your hotel is a typically Moroccan. Enjoy a tagine and perhaps a glass of wine before you reach the miles of glorious sand that await you the following day. Total journey time 5 – 6 hrs, lunch en route. (B,L,D)

Day 3. Drive to M'Hamid, begin trekking

This 5hr drive takes you through the beautiful Draa Valley. The Draa river allows this valley to remain lush. After a picnic lunch, you will eventually reach M'Hamid, a Desert town and where the road literally ends. Here you will meet your support team, complete with camels and handlers and your trek begins. The first section is fairly short to introduce you to the terrain and also allow you to set up your tents for the first time. (B,L,D)

Day 4. Desert Trekking

For your first full day, you will trek further into the desert, experiencing what life there is (and there is more than you think) and the tranquillity that it can bring. Life is simple here. With no ambient light and the desert to absorb all sound, the evenings and nights are just so dark and quiet. It is quite eerie even just to sit on a small dune overlooking the camp site and just look and listen. The stars are so bright and it is very easy to spot the orbiting satellites as they speed across the skies above you. (B,L,D)

Day 5. Sunset on Eric

As you trek deeper into the Desert you will experience deeper and more abundant dunes until you can see Erg Zaher on the horizon. Camping tonight will be amidst the dunes close to "Eric", as our clients fondly call it, and once camp is set up, you will climb this 300m (1000ft) dune to watch the sunset across the Sahara.

This is a moving and quite surreal experience for most people as the colours of the desert are highlighted by the setting sun. A time to reflect and truly experience the silence surrounding you. (B,L,D)

Day 6. Desert Trekking

Today you will continue your journey and by now you will be wondering how your Guide is navigating; it all looks so similar with no landmarks to speak of. Although your days are spent walking separately from your support crew, they will always be miraculously waiting for you when you arrive at your lunch or evening stop. (B,L,D)

Day 7. Desert Trekking

On your final full day of trekking you will start to leave the deeper dunes behind as the terrain changes to hamada or rocky, barren plateaus. You may encounter abandoned and derelict dwellings or even remote wells used by the Nomads as they traverse the desert. (B,L,D)

Day 8. Final trek day, overnight Ouarzazate

This morning a short final trek will take you to meet your transport where you will say goodbye to your support crew and head back to Ouarzazate. Once in the hotel, you can relax and have that well earned shower! Then it's time to get those clean clothes on and enjoy a celebration dinner. (B, D)

Day 9. Drive to Marrakesh, overnight Marrakesh

After breakfast, it's back towards Marrakesh. We get you back as soon as we can leaving you plenty of time to get out into the Medina and experience the multitude of Souks. The bartering and market activity is something special. In the evening, enjoy a traditional meal in any one of many restaurants or try your chance by eating on one of the street stalls. (B)

Day 10. Depart for London, (B)

Inclusions

- International flights London - Marrakech - London
- Return airport transfers in Marrakesh
- Fully qualified English speaking local guides from arrival in country
- Private road transfers to and from the trek
- All accommodation during your trip on a twin/triple share basis
- All meals on trek and B&B in hotels
- Purified bottled water on trek
- Camel support with camelteers on trek
- Celebration dinner in Ouarzazate
- Challenge Manual containing everything you need to know
- Full support before and during your trip
- Discounts from UK retailers

Exclusions

- Travel Insurance
This trip is often covered by standard insurance as the trekking is below 2000m. Check any existing policies before taking out specialist insurance. Budget £40 for a stand alone policy
- Vaccinations
All standard boosters should be up to date. Please check with your GP or travel nurse for any additional requirements.
- Tips for local staff
We would recommend you should set aside £35 in Moroccan Dirhams to be divided between the staff. Advice will be provided on our recommended ratio in our final travel information.
- Personal spending money.

Challenge Costs


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Total Cost for your trip (includes deposit below)	£1050
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Payment Breakdown

Deposit for all payment options	£250
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+ Plus one of the following payment options

Self funded final balance	£800
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Sponsorship funded fundraising total	£1600
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Flexi funded personal contribution	£200
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fundraising total	£1200
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Payment Options Explained

There are 3 payment options to choose from when you sign up. With all 3, there is the initial deposit which is your personal contribution towards the cost of your challenge. This is not a fee for administration but will secure the services/flights for your trip and forms part of the overall trip cost.

Self Funded

This option allows you to pay the entire cost of your trip yourself. The balance payment for your trip is due 60 days prior to your departure. You can then make arrangements directly with your chosen charity and all money you fundraise will go directly to that charity.

Sponsorship Funded

You commit to raising a minimum amount of sponsorship for your chosen charity from which the remaining balance for your trip will be paid. You will be asked to complete a pledge form with the charity setting out the target dates and any guidelines required; this is a requirement of your booking. Your chosen charity will support your fundraising throughout and all sponsorship money you raise must be paid to them upon receipt.

Generally, the sponsorship target is set to ensure that a minimum of 50% of the money you raise is retained by the charity. All money raised above the target will also be retained by the charity. Your fundraising target must be met, and paid to the charity, a min of 10 weeks prior to your departure date. This enables them to pay the remaining balance for your trip with no financial risk to themselves.

Flexi Funded

In addition to the deposit, you pay a 2nd personal contribution which reduces the fundraising target. You then commit to raising a minimum amount of sponsorship for your chosen charity from which the remaining balance for your trip will be paid. You will be asked to complete a pledge form with the charity setting out the target dates and any guidelines required; this is a requirement of your booking. Your chosen charity will support your fundraising throughout and all sponsorship money you raise must be paid to them upon receipt.

Generally, the sponsorship target is set to ensure that a minimum of 50% of the money you raise is retained by the charity. All money raised above the target will also be retained by the charity. Your fundraising target must be met, and paid to the charity, a min of 10 weeks prior to your departure date. This enables them to pay the remaining balance for your trip with no financial risk to themselves.

Your financial protection

You are financially protected against our insolvency.

Our ATOL Licence number is 10755. [Click here to view verification.](#)

When you buy an ATOL protected flight or flight inclusive holiday from us you will receive an ATOL Certificate. This lists what is financially protected, where you can get information on what this means for you and who to contact if things go wrong.

We, or the suppliers identified on your ATOL Certificate, will provide you with the services listed on the ATOL Certificate (or a suitable alternative). In some cases, where neither we nor the supplier are able to do so for reasons of insolvency, an alternative ATOL holder may provide you with the services you have bought or a suitable alternative (at no extra cost to you). You agree to accept that in those circumstances the alternative ATOL holder will perform those obligations and you agree to pay any money outstanding to be paid by you under your contract to that alternative ATOL holder. However, you also agree that in some cases it will not be possible to appoint an alternative ATOL holder, in which case you will be entitled to make a claim under the ATOL scheme (or your credit card issuer where applicable).

If we, or the suppliers identified on your ATOL Certificate, are unable to provide the services listed (or a suitable alternative, through an alternative ATOL holder or otherwise) for reasons of insolvency, the Trustees of

the Air Travel Trust may make a payment to (or confer a benefit on) you under the ATOL scheme. That agree that in return for such a payment of benefit you assign absolutely to those Trustees any claims which you have or may have arising out of or relating to the non-provision of the services, including any claim against us, the travel agent (or your credit card issuer where applicable). You also agree that any such claims may be re-assigned to another body, if that other body has paid sums you have claimed under the ATOL scheme.

[Click here](#) for Consumer Information on your ATOL protection.



Many of the flights and flight-inclusive holidays in this brochure are financially protected by the ATOL scheme. But ATOL protection does not apply to all holiday and travel services listed in this brochure. Please ask us to confirm what protection may apply to your booking. If you do not receive an ATOL Certificate then the booking will not be ATOL protected. If you do receive an ATOL Certificate but all the parts of your trip are not listed on it, those parts will not be ATOL protected. Please see our booking conditions for information, or for more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate



Your questions answered

What is a typical day like on trek?

You will need to be ready for the hearty breakfast with bags packed (ready to load onto the camels) and your tent packed away by 7am, just as the sun is rising. Underway by 8am, there are regular breaks before you reach your lunch stop which can be a lengthy chance to rest while avoiding the hottest part of the day.

A few more hours trekking in the afternoon will take you to your night stop and after some tea and biscuits, it's time to pitch your tent, clean up and prepare for the evening. Dinner is towards dusk and with the sun setting between 6-7pm, most people are eager to enjoy the star filled night skies and welcome an early night's sleep.

How tough is the challenge?

We will be walking between 5 - 7 hours per day over the four full days, with roughly 2 hours per day on the first and last day of trekking. We don't usually work in distance as the terrain plays a huge part, therefore we always work in hours. Just to give you an indication, the total distance covered will be between 65 and 100km depending on the ability of the group as a whole.

Temperatures during the day will vary between 25° and 40° and nights can feel cold with temperatures dropping to single figures. You will need mental and physical endurance to undertake this trip and we would recommend a good general level of fitness.

After booking, you will be asked to complete an Emergency Details Form which will include your medical history. If we have any doubts about your ability to take part in the challenge, we may ask you to provide a letter of fitness from your GP, therefore we would recommend that if you have any concerns, you speak to your GP prior to booking.

What will the food be like?

The food whilst on trek is freshly prepared by our skilled camp chef and his team and the food is so good that our chef has now been nicknamed "Jamie Oliver".

Breakfast is an open air buffet style with cereals, porridge and Moroccan breakfast on offer with all the condiments you could imagine.

Lunch is a leisurely affair usually under the shade of the Tamerisk trees with fresh salads and often a hot dish such as Moroccan pulses and fruit to follow.

After your tea/coffee and biscuits on arrival in camp, your evening meal will be a three course feast served by your guides and followed by "sleepy tea" to aid a peaceful nights sleep.

What about special dietary requirements?

We can cater for all individual dietary requirements if you let us know in advance.

Can I travel on my own?

Yes! Our 'Open Challenge' trips are available to anyone wishing to join, either as a group or as an individual. Groups form close bonds even if they have never met before the challenge, which makes our trips such a

huge success with those taking part and leads to lifelong friendships. In some situations, it's also possible to join one of our closed groups challenges if the charity and the group are open to additional members. There is no harm in asking!

What will the accommodation be like?

Marrakech - We use a variety of hotels and traditional Riads depending on the size of the group.

Riads are traditional houses or Palaces with interior gardens and courtyards and tend to be within the maze of the Medina streets. Whilst having a limited number of rooms, each one is decorated differently and furnished in a Moroccan style.

Our hotels are much larger to cater for bigger numbers and therefore are a little further out of the centre. They are of 4* standard or above and usually have swimming pools, a bar, safety deposit boxes, etc..

Quarzazate - Our hotel is of 3* European standard, all rooms have en suite facilities and it has a swimming pool.

In the Desert - you will be staying in 2/3 person tents. Foam sleeping mats are provided; you will need your own sleeping bag. Toilet facilities are communal (tented hole in the ground). Washing facilities are a bowl of water from a well; there are no showers.

What do you mean by 'Early Guarantee Status'?

Unlike many companies, we will guarantee a trip with numbers as low as 2 people, even if they are two independent travellers. This means that from a very early stage you can fundraise and make your travel plans, safe in the knowledge that your trip will not be cancelled at a late stage due to minimum numbers not being reached.

We have organised many trips at the last minute for people who have achieved their fundraising total, only to find that the trip is cancelled by other companies two months before they are due to depart. We know how vital this assurance is.

How big are your groups?

Our average group size in the Sahara is 12-18 however we can accommodate much smaller or larger groups if required.

Can I extend my stay?

As long as you let us know at the time of booking, we can adjust your outbound or return flights so that you can enjoy some additional time in country. We don't make any charge for this adjustment and as long as your revised dates are not affected by increase flight prices, the cost will remain the same.

If you would like to extend and discuss the options with us then we're more than happy to help.

Some suggestions:

- Spend an extra night or two in Marrakesh.
- Enjoy a few nights relaxing by the sea in Essaouira, a charming and vibrant port and resort town on the Atlantic Ocean. It's just a couple of hours away by road.

Your questions answered

Will I have to pay a single supplement?

Not unless you request sole occupation.

Generally, all accommodation is on a twin/triple share, same-sex basis. We will pair you with another member of the group. If you wish to be paired with someone specific within the group, just let us know.

If you decide that you would like to have your own room/tent, we can accommodate this in the majority of cases and an additional fee will be applicable and payable personally. Please indicate your preference on the booking form.

If you do not indicate that you wish to have sole occupation and you happen to be the odd one out, then you will be accommodated on your own at no additional cost.

Requested Sole Occupation fee for the Sahara Challenge: £120

When is the best time to go?

Late September to the beginning of April is considered the optimum months for completing this challenge. However late November to early February can be quite cold at night.

Temperatures during the day can range between 25°-40° with night time temperatures varying from single figures to 18°.

If the evenings are warm enough, then sleeping out under the stars is highly recommended and something most people enjoy doing. Always make sure that you still pitch your tent; the weather can change at any time and the last thing you want to do is be caught out in a sandstorm or even worse, unexpected rain during the night with no where to retreat to.

How safe is Morocco?

The safety of our trekkers is of paramount importance and we follow formal procedures as well as taking practical common sense measures, should the need be there, to ensure you are safe.

The stark reality of life today is that of a global threat of terrorism. Morocco (Marrakesh) has been attacked in the past and so too has London! It doesn't happen everyday but always possible.

The only source of travel advice you should seek is that of the UK Govt's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). If their advice is 'not to travel' or 'all but essential travel', then we would be cancelling the trip.

The FCO's travel advice is taken from numerous sources including the UK's Intelligence Services and from other countries too. If attacks were imminent, the advice we are sure would change.

Practical Measures. Even though the FCO's advice may be unchanged, if our staff in Marrakesh are aware of any form of local civil unrest they may affect your safety, we would take measures to move you out of Marrakesh and head over the High Atlas towards the Desert.

We have yet to encounter any form of negative activity in Morocco and in the Sahara you will hardly see anyone else!

Can I book if I'm travelling from overseas?

Yes. If you live outside the UK then please contact us and we will be able to make arrangements for you to meet us in country on a Land Only basis or connect with our flights from the UK.

Can we book as a private group?

Yes. All of our challenges can be booked for a private group either through the charity of your choice or as an independent group of friends fundraising for one or more charities. You will have the option to choose dates to suit and also amend the itinerary to either lengthen or shorten your trip as required.

Can I choose any charity?

You can choose your charity when booking onto an open challenge or if you are booking as a group. We work with many of the large as well as smaller charities which are local, national and internationally based.

Before your booking can be processed, we need confirmation from your chosen charity which we will organise on your behalf. Please be aware that some larger charities will now only accept self funded challenges.

How soon should I book? / How long to fundraise?

We would always advise that you book your challenge as soon as possible (many opt to book a year in advance) to allow plenty of time for fundraising. Fundraising target dates are 10 weeks before departure.

That said, if flights and the trip you are interested in still have availability, you can book at any time, particularly if you are choosing the self funded payment method.

If you want to book onto a specific challenge then we would always advise that you contact us first to discuss the funding options in relation to the timescale before departure.

How do I book?

A Charity Challenge is one of the most rewarding events you can take part in. Once you decide what you want to do and when you would like to go, the next thing is to decide which charity you would like to fundraise for. We would even suggest that you contact us to have a chat about the challenge and in particular if you are taking on a sponsorship method so that we can contact the charity to seek their approval for the funding.

Before booking any challenge, we would recommend that you thoroughly check through our booking conditions as acceptance is a requirement of your booking. They are available online [here](#).

Once approval is in place, we will issue you with the charity pledge form for you to complete, along with our booking form available online [here](#). These forms should then be returned to us together with your deposit. Those who are self funding can complete the booking form and forward it to us with their deposit.

What happens after I book?

Once we receive your completed booking, we will issue you with a confirmation letter, ATOL certificate, receipt invoice, the Challenge Manual and details of any retail discounts available to our clients. You will also be provided with a link to the client area of our web site. Here you will be able to access our required forms, and information which will help you prepare for your challenge.

