



Morocco

Grand Atlas Traverse

24 Days

An exceptional expedition experience: this unique trip is one of our flagship 'Old School' expeditions. Far removed from the crowds of the Toubkal region, it's a tough undertaking, yet one which takes schools on an extraordinary journey through the snow-capped mountains, dramatic canyons, and remote villages of the Central High Atlas Mountains. On this extended journey, Morocco will slowly seep into your soul as you gain access to a region, people and way of life that has changed little over the centuries. We finish with the bustling mayhem of Marrakech and an opportunity to reflect on a stunning journey that will change your global perspective and open up a world of adventure.



[Learn more about our
Carbon Labels](#)

Your Recommended Expedition Itinerary

Day 1	Fly from the UK to Marrakech On arrival in Marrakech, we are met by our local guide and transferred to our hotel.	BLD
Day 2	Ttransfer to Imilchil in the Atlas Mountains to start trek We transfer to Imilchil 2100 m, then start trekking to Oulghazi 2120 m, which is approximately a 2-hour trek. We will camp overnight.	BLD
Days 3 - 5	River gorges trek We begin our trek, passing through Berber villages in the Melloul Valley, via the gorges and along the Asif Melloul River to Timicha 1900 m. During our 5-hour trek, we'll walk through the (usually shallow), before setting up camp for the night. The walk on day 4 is largely in the river gorges and from time to time we will cross the river. However, if the water levels are too high, we will use another trail. After 7 hours of trekking, we will reach Batli Camp at 1600 m and set up camp for the evening. On the morning of day 5, we'll ascend through the pine forest to a pass at about 1840 m. Below us is our destination – the small remote mountain village of Ait Boulmane 1520 m. Today's trek is approximately 5 hours, and we will reach the village around mid-afternoon. Tonight, we have a little more comfort as we stay in the village house.	BLD
Day 6	Rest Day After four days on the move, we have a rest day and relax in the wonderful surroundings of the mountains. There is an optional visit to the local Hamam to ease any sore muscles from the first part of our trek. This is a remote area and very unfrequented by tourists. Overnight village house.	BLD
Days 7 - 8	Continue trekking - pastures and passes Today we are back on the trail, as we head along the valley and then hike up to the high pasture plateau of Aït Abdi to reach the camp at Imeder 2200 m. This is one of the longer days on the trek at approximately 7 hrs. Overnight camp. On day 8, we trek via the high pass of 2750 m to Agoudal n'llamchal 2450 m. before setting up our camp again for the evening. Our trek today is approximately 5 hours, but we are starting to get higher and camp in more remote places.	BLD
Days 9 - 10	High Passes and remote camps Today we ascend for approximately 4 hours to another pass, then follow the trail to the dramatic Taghia canyon where we camp at 2500 m. The descent into the canyon is very steep, without a trail, and is only suitable for more experienced walkers. However, this excursion is optional and those who want to remain in the camp may do so. Afterwards we will trek in the canyon, for another 3 hours, before setting up camp for the night. On day 10, we trek up to a pass of 3000 m, before descending to Izourar Lake, which is often dried up. Another long day at approximately 7 hours - but we will be supremely fit by now and the endless dramatic mountain scenery and remote location adds to the sense of adventure! We will camp overnight.	BLD
Day 11	Start our descent We will descend for five hours until we reach the fertile Ait Hkim valley where we follow the valley floor to the village of Ikhf n'Ighir 1850 m.	BLD



Day 12	Free day in Ait Bougumez 1850 m Having finished the first section of our trek, we have a rest day in the village to sort out our kit and tend to any aches and pains. We also can start thinking ahead to the project over the coming days and discussing with the locals how we plan to tackle the tasks ahead of us. We will stay overnight in a village house.	BLD
Days 13 - 15	Mountain village project work The exact nature of the project the group will undertake in the village will depend on what help the local community needs at the time of our visit. The Village Association will meet to discuss the needs of the community and put forward suggestions for work they would like to be done. It is likely that we won't have the exact details of the project we will be working on until nearer the time of our visit. Previous groups have built incinerators, repaired footbridges, and paths, planted cacti on the hill sides to prevent soil erosion and laid water pipes and drainage ditches. Whatever you end up doing, these days spent among the villages in the company of local families will be an undoubted highlight of our time in Morocco.	BLD
Days 16 - 19	Mt Mgoun ascent - 4068m <p>Over the next few days, we undertake a trek to the summit of Mt Mgoun, which at 4068m is Morocco's second highest mountain. Mt Mgoun and the surrounding area is a UNESCO Global GeoPark; it's a stunning, remote area of the High Atlas Mountains, far removed from the crowds of Mt Toubkal, where most trekkers tend to go. The only way to access this area is on foot.</p> <p>A gentle start to the trek takes us through the Bougamez Valley where the locals will be tending their lush green fields and apple orchards. From the valley floor at around 1850m, we start to climb through a narrow gorge above the village of Ait Sa'id and follow valley paths with great views of the surrounding mountains, including the Mgoun massif far in the distance. Our first night stop is at an altitude of around 2600m. It's likely we'll see shepherds and their flocks roaming the valleys as this whole area is rich in summer grazing and a place where nomadic herders spend their summers. On day two, we start climbing higher with a steady ascent to cross the Aghouri pass at 3450m. On the other side of the pass there are superb views down to the high plateau where we will be spending the night and to the Mgoun ridge beyond, which we will be tackling tomorrow. We descend on a rough path to the plateau below where we camp close to the Mountain Refuge. The altitude here is 2,980m. All being well, we'll arrive shortly after lunch and have the afternoon to relax and enjoy the mountain scenery. We get an early night as we'll need to be up and trekking at around 4am for our summit attempt. When you wake, make sure you look up, if it's a clear night then the stars will be spectacular!</p> <p>Next, we make our ascent to the summit of Djebel (Mount) Mgoun. Make sure you stock up with at least three litres of water as it will be a long day. Setting off well before dawn, our guide will set a slow pace, but this will help our acclimatisation. After around five hours we reach the summit ridge at 4000m and enjoy amazing views down into the Anti-Atlas Mountain range and the Sahara Desert beyond. After following the ridge for a further 2km we reach the summit itself. From here, it's a steep descent down into the valley. The path is mainly on scree (loose stones), with the odd patch of bare earth/rock which requires some concentration, but other than that it's a simple, albeit long, descent into the Assif n Oulilimt valley to our overnight camp. Summit day usually takes around 11 to 12 hours, involving 1100m of ascent and nearly 1500m of descent, but it's worth it - the scenery is out of this world. Our mule and cook team will be waiting for us at camp with a hearty meal.</p> <p>The final days of our trek are spent winding down the Assif n Oulilimt valley, complete with river crossings, incredible sandstone rock formations, nomadic herders and huge rocky mountains soaring to our right. As we near the end of our trek, we once more start to come across small villages and we sense we have returned from the high-altitude wilderness to a place of human habitation, albeit one that is still very remote. Tired, but elated, we'll take our minibuses back to The Bougamez Valley</p>	BLD
Days 20 - 21	Mountain biking Today we'll swap boots for bikes and cycle along the upper Tessaout valley to Ait Ali n'Ito. The route is mostly downhill and takes approximately 3 hours. In the afternoon we visit the village of Megdaz 2140 m. In the evening we stay at a small local hotel. We continue cycling the next day to the natural bridge of Imi n'Ifri where we are picked up by our vehicles and transferred back to Marrakech. Approximately 5 hours cycling and 2 hours road transfer. Overnight Hotel in Marrakech.	BLD

Days 22 - 23**Marrakech - markets and minarets**

BLD

We have two days to explore this vibrant and magical city beginning with a morning walking city tour of the highlights, with plenty of time to explore the markets and souks that make this city so famous. On the final evening, we celebrate with a big meal out at a local restaurant.

Day 24**Transfer to the airport and fly to the UK**

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After a long and challenging expedition, it's time to take stock of all we've achieved over the past three weeks. Saying goodbye to our Moroccan expedition leader, we transfer back to the airport and fly back to the UK.



Look what's included:

- International flights
- All accommodation, transportation and activities
- All food as described above
- Local, bi-lingual, first-aid qualified STC leader
- Parent and student trip launch presentation
- Pre-travel training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for school staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Emergency Medical & Repatriation Insurance

- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Donations to two carbon & conservation charities
- Free Fairtrade t-shirt for every participant and teacher
- Free travel guide book to your destination

What's not included:

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations or Covid tests

- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters (ask for guidance)
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Personal effects and cancellation insurance



A word about Responsible Tourism

On our expeditions and educational journeys, we strive to connect teachers and students with the people they meet, nurture the cultures they experience and protect the beautiful environments they are lucky enough to explore.

Many companies talk the talk, few truly walk the walk. We are far from perfect, but we are leading the way in sustainability in the school travel sector. In 2018 we were the first UK travel company to become **Travelife Certified** – a verified sustainability certificate formally recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.



Trees for Life

This is our passion, and we'd love to tell you more about it in due course. In the meantime, for more information on some of the steps we take as a company to make our operations more sustainable, please visit:

<https://www.thestc.co.uk/travel/what-do-we-do/>

Physical Rating for this trip: Grade 5



A high level of fitness is required to participate on a trip of this level. We recommend previous multi-day trekking experience at this level, either in the UK or internationally. You need complete confidence in your ability to trek for multiple days over difficult terrain and cope with significant variations in temperatures throughout the tour. Altitude could be higher than 4,500m but good acclimatisation will be built into the programme. Longer periods of trekking could be of a sustained nature, but rest days will be planned. A pre-travel fitness programme of four to six months is essential to ensure you are in optimal fitness to make the most of this trip.

Cultural Rating for this trip: Grade 4



Students joining trips at this level will find the comforts of home are more of a rarity – or viewed another way, a welcome luxury. English is unlikely to be widely spoken and the food will be quite different to home, perhaps for extended sections of the trip. You should observe local customs so not to cause offence. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty and accommodation in some locations is likely to be basic. Whilst a challenge, destinations and trips at cultural level 4 are also a fantastic opportunity to see a very different part of the world.



Travel Safety & Other Expedition Training

Preparing students and teachers for their upcoming adventure is an opportunity to teach important life skills and a vital part of our overall approach to safety management. Please ask for your quote for the training schedule specific to your expedition. Topics covered will include:

Responsible Tourism workshop

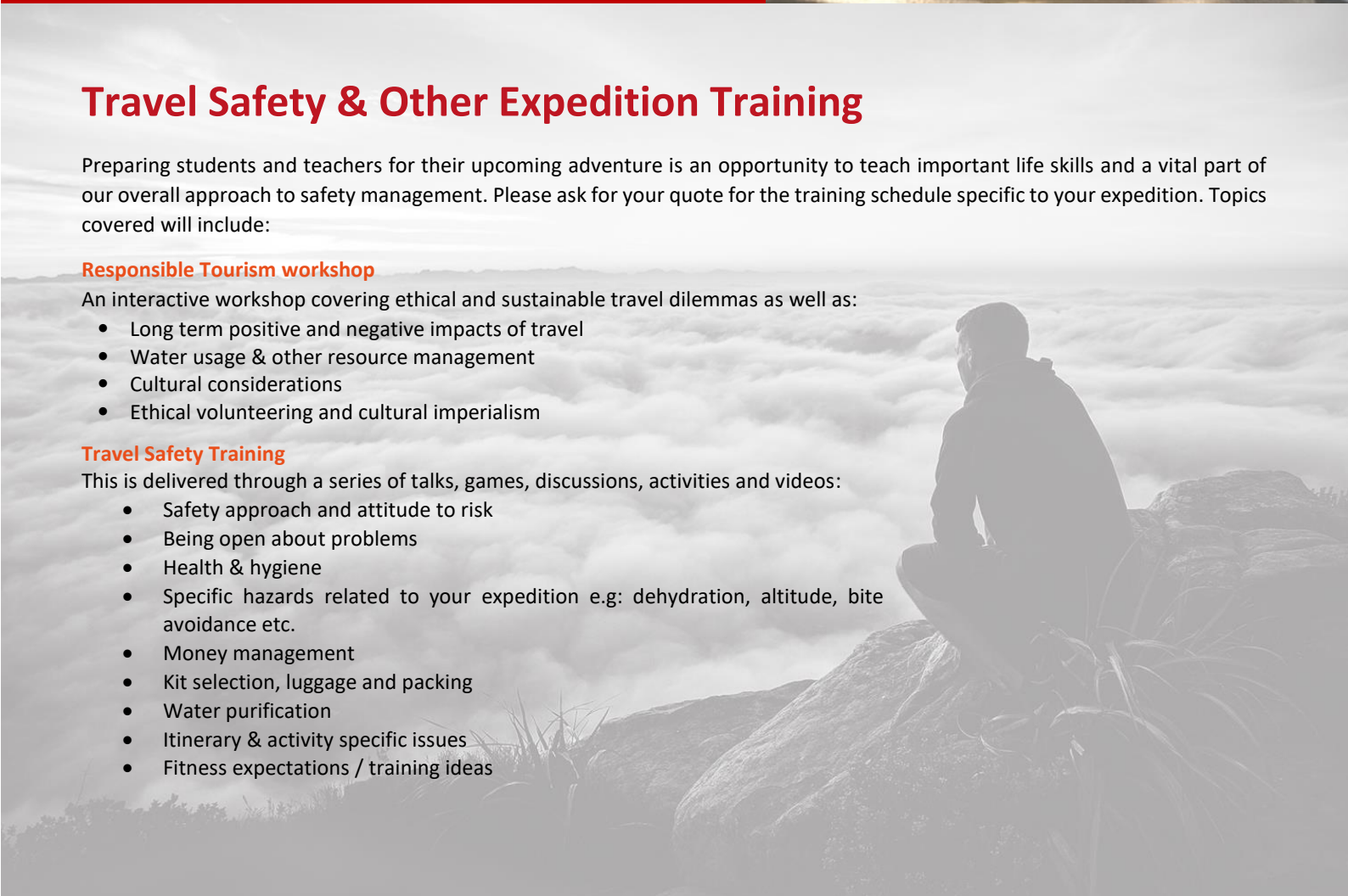
An interactive workshop covering ethical and sustainable travel dilemmas as well as:

- Long term positive and negative impacts of travel
- Water usage & other resource management
- Cultural considerations
- Ethical volunteering and cultural imperialism

Travel Safety Training

This is delivered through a series of talks, games, discussions, activities and videos:

- Safety approach and attitude to risk
- Being open about problems
- Health & hygiene
- Specific hazards related to your expedition e.g: dehydration, altitude, bite avoidance etc.
- Money management
- Kit selection, luggage and packing
- Water purification
- Itinerary & activity specific issues
- Fitness expectations / training ideas





A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your expedition journey

1 Ask for your personalised quote & further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your expedition itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an adventure that's just right for you and your students. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk and threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your Pre-Booking Information Pack too.

3 Arrange an expedition launch evening

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the expedition with a comprehensive information evening covering the itinerary, safety management, the build-up to the trip and lots more. There is also plenty of opportunity for questions.



The home of the modern, innovative school expedition, where a sustainable, ethical approach guarantees unique experiences and a life enhancing adventure.



Our school trips and educational tours are all about maximising the learning opportunities of travel. It's all here, the humble school tour has just come of age.



Adventures, holidays and cultural journeys for teachers looking to 'Escape the Classroom' and discover more about our amazing world, its people and places.



"I am being completely serious when I say that I won't ever run a school trip without you guys. I trust you and your team completely - and the in-country staff that you carefully cultivate and train are a cut above the rest."

Teacher feedback, King's High Warwick

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