

## Happy Valley & the M'goun Gorges Trek

Morocco's best kept-secret - the beautiful Bougamez Valley and the spectacular M'goun Gorges brought together in one exhilarating trek in the remote heart of the High Atlas.



### Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

### Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Riad, Gite, Camping
Grade	Moderate / Vigorous
Duration	10 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On Trek: 7 days
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader Morocco
Land only	Joining in Marrakesh
Max altitude	3,400m/11,155ft, Tizi n Bouzou, Day 5

**Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available**



tel: +44 (0)1453 844400 fax: +44 (0)1453 844422 info@mountainkingdoms.com www.mountainkingdoms.com

## Departures

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### 2024 Dates:

Fri 17 May - Sun 26 May

Fri 04 Oct - Sun 13 Oct

### 2025 Dates:

Fri 16 May - Sun 25 May

Fri 03 Oct - Sun 12 Oct

### Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

### No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

### Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

### Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

### Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

### Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

## Your guide

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The trip will be led by a qualified Berber guide who is ideally placed to give you an insight into and information about their country, especially as much of this tour runs through the Berber or Tachelhit speaking parts of Morocco. The Moroccan government closely controls the appointment of both mountain and town guides. Your guide will have completed a year of training at the Centre for Mountain Guides in Tabant in the Central High Atlas. During their training guides complete courses in first aid, geography, history and the natural science of Morocco as well as testing their fitness.

Our Moroccan leaders are selected on the basis of their experience, levels of spoken English and helpfulness. Like the Berber culture from which they come they are all very welcoming and have a love of showing you their country.

## Your trip highlights

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- Explore a little known part of the High Atlas where you are unlikely to see many other trekking groups.
- Discover the magical Bougamez Valley - known as the Happy Valley and considered one of the most beautiful valleys in all of Morocco and one of its best-kept secrets.
- Walk and wade through the spectacular M'goun Gorges, carved into the mountains of the High Atlas.
- Meet nomadic shepherds with their herds of sheep and goats
- Trek with experienced and fully qualified Berber guides
- Enjoy comfortable camping with good quality tents, chairs and dining table, tasty locally sourced food.
- Stay in a centrally located Riad hotel in Marrakesh

## At a glance itinerary

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Day 1	Fly to Marrakesh. Transfer to a central riad.
Day 2	Drive to the Bougamez Valley (Happy Valley). Short walk.
Days 3-5	Trek through the Happy Valley and climb out via the Tizi n Bouzou pass.
Day 6	Descend to near the M'goun Gorges
Days 7-8	Trek through the gorges. End trek at Boutraghar.
Day 9	Drive back to Marrakesh via the Valley of the Roses, Ouarzazate and Ait Benhaddou.
Day 10	At leisure. Transfer to airport. Fly to UK.

## Trip summary

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On this exciting trip you will venture deep into a remote area in the heart of the High Atlas Mountains, trekking beneath the peak of Jebel M'goun, the third highest mountain in Morocco. This is a trek of amazing variety and contrasts, featuring an enchanting walk through a broad, fertile valley, high level trekking over a 3,400m pass, and exciting gorge walking beneath towering cliff faces, often wading through rivers.

It begins at Ait Bougamez, also known as Vallée Heureuse or the Happy Valley. This aptly named fertile stretch is wonderfully picturesque. Colourful orchards and a patchwork of wheat and barley fields glow golden in the sun whilst the air is heady with the scent of wild herbs. Surrounding the valley is a backdrop of red, rocky hills and high snow-dusted peaks, the lower slopes dotted with traditional mud-brick houses and tiny villages. Ait Bougamez is home to the Berber people who have inhabited the area for a very long time and live their life in much the same way as they have over many generations, harvesting the crops using time-honoured methods and making their own herbal medicines. The Happy Valley is considered to be one of the most beautiful in all Morocco and is undoubtedly one of its best-kept secrets.

Climbing high out of the valley, the scenery becomes ever more stark and dramatic with only nomadic herders for company. The Tizi n Bouzou Pass at 3,400m is the high point of the trek after which it's downhill all the way into the truly spectacular Gorges of M'goun. Trekking through the gorges is an exhilarating and fun experience. In places they narrow to just a few metres wide and you will need to wade the river between tremendous beetling cliffs.

On your trek you will be accompanied by a local Berber guide, a cook and muleteers who look after the mules who carry the camp equipment and your kit bags. Typically, you can expect to be trekking for 5-7 hours each day and on some days you need to wade the rivers at the bottom of the gorges, with water possibly reaching up to or even above your knees. This is a breath taking trek in every sense, offering stunning scenery and dramatic gorges, plus the fun of numerous river crossings in an area which, in contrast to Jebel Toubkal, sees relatively few visitors.

The drive back to Marrakesh passes through the Valley of Roses - carpeted with glorious pink roses in the spring - and then the vivid greens of the palmeries of Skoura. You visit two of Morocco's fascinating kasbahs - Amherdhil and Ait Benhaddou, a striking example of the architecture of southern Morocco. Finally you return to Marrakesh with time for some exploration of this most enthralling of Arabian cities.

# Your trip itinerary

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## Day 1: Fly London to Marrakesh.

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You will depart London on the flight to Marrakesh. On arrival in Marrakesh you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Marrakesh airport is only 7km from the old city centre and it's therefore just a short transfer to your hotel. Dinner tonight is included.

**Overnight: Riad Palais De Princesses or Similar, Marrakesh (Meals: D)**

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## Day 2: Drive to Ait Bougamez, approximately 1,900m - 5 hours. Walk to see dinosaur tracks at Aguerd N Ouzrou and the Igrane of Sidi Moussa - 1 hour walk.

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Today's drive takes you to Ait Bougamez - the Happy Valley - in the heart of the High Atlas. Your route takes you through scenic foothills via Demnate and there will be a short stop not far from Demnate to view the Imi n Ifri Cave. This is a beautiful, photogenic formation of limestone and dolomite and is best viewed from the bridge where the road crosses. A few miles further on the road enters the mountains proper and passes through picturesque vineyards. Eventually you descend through beautiful scenery - you should have views of M'goun, Morocco's third highest mountain - to Ait Bougamez.

Your journey finishes at the tiny village of Imelghas at the end of the valley. Your altitude here is about 1,900 metres. You will firstly check in to your gite accommodation and have a little time to relax before heading out to nearby Aguerd N Ouzrou for a short walk. Your guide will take you to see some faint dinosaur tracks believed to be 180 million years old. You will then climb a hill to see the fortified hilltop granary of Sidi Moussa, also used as a shrine it is the sacred focal point of the valley. The walk to the top is steep but the panoramic views of the entire Bougamez Valley from the top make it well worth the effort. You then return to your accommodation.

**Overnight: Dar Itrane or Similar, Imelghas (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 3: Trek to Lac Izourar, 2,526m - 6 hours, 15-17km, 450m ascent.

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After your long drive yesterday, today is a delightful day of trekking in the Happy Valley. You follow small paths through orchards and cultivated fields, fording irrigation ditches and contouring along the side of the valley. You reach more barren, mountainous terrain before heading up the valley to the village of Zaouiate Oualmzi where you stop for lunch.

After a relaxing break you trek onwards climbing ever higher across small gorges where you may well see nomadic shepherds tending their herds of goats and sheep. Finally you reach Lac Izourar, a seasonal lake that becomes populated by the nomads of the region in the summer months. It is in a beautiful location, surrounded by high mountains with peaks soaring up to 3,700m. Here you will stop and camp for the night.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 4: Trek to Addrar N'Ouchane, 3,230m - 6-7 hours, 13km, approximately 750m ascent.

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For much of today your path climbs slowly and steadily, interspersed with some stretches of downhill, along small tracks with shrubs and rocky terrain underfoot.

Today will give you a real insight into the life of the local nomadic people in the high pastures. Their large herds are mainly sheep or goats although sometimes they even have camels. The livestock are moved between grazing grounds in a seasonal cycle, moving between high pastures in the summertime to lower level feeding in the winter. The nomads sleep in tents made from camel wool.

Your campsite tonight is around 200 metres below the Ouchane Pass.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 5: Trek to Aguerd N'Iskaoun, 2,480m, across the Tizi n'Bouzou pass, 3,454m - 5-6hours, 8-9km, 400m ascent.**

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It's a beautiful walk today through splendid mountain scenery often frequented by Ait Atta nomads. You start with a bit of a haul up to the Ouchane pass, 3,452m, followed by a descent to the Jebel Illitou Plateau. After crossing the plateau you climb again, but only for around 100 metres to reach the Tizi n'Bouzou pass. The views reward your effort as you reach the highest point of your trek and you will stop for a well-earned lunch break once you are across. After this it's downhill most of the way into camp!

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 6: Trek to the village of Imi N'Irkt, 1,780m, in the M'goun Gorges - 5 hours, approximately 8km, mainly descent of around 700m.**

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It will be a relief to know that today is mostly gradual descent. As you are now on the southern side of the Atlas Mountains you will find it warmer with more exposure to the sunshine. Trekking downhill you enter the valley of Ouzirimte, passing the small villages of Tichki and Igherm Izdarn. As you descend the valley becomes more and more narrow and the stream fills the gorge. You are now in the M'goun Gorges and will camp tonight near the village of Imi Nirkt.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 7: Trek through the Gorge of Achaabou to the village of Tirnimine, 1,700m - approximately 5 hours, 13-14km, slight descent**

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Trekking sandals are essential for the next few days as you trek through the winding M'goun Gorges. The water in the gorges sometimes reaches knee level so you will be wading as much as walking!

Today you trek through the Achaabou Gorge which narrows to just a few metres wide with colourful sandstone and limestone walls towering impressively above you for hundreds of feet. You will make up to 70 river crossings today so keep your sandals on. After an exciting day you arrive at the village of Tirnimine where you camp for the night. The time it will take to complete the walk today will depend on the level of the water in the gorge.



**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 8: Trek to Boutragarh through the gorges of Issoumer, 1,630m - 7 hours, approximately 15km, mainly descent.**

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From Tiranimine you follow the M'goun River through small gorges to reach the village of Aguerzka and then continue through the gorges of Issoumer. Once again there are a great number of river crossings today. Your route varies between gorge walking beneath high cliff walls and crossing through more open areas of flattish land where it is possible for villagers to grow apple trees and date palms. For the last couple of hours you will follow the river course, past dry mountainsides and down to the greener fields and palms of Boutragarh. Here you will camp for the final time and perhaps celebrate the end of a successful trek with your guide and crew.

**Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 9: Drive through the Valley of the Roses to Ouarzazate, visit Ait Benhaddou. Drive to Marrakesh via Tizi n'Tichka, 2,260m - 7 hours total driving**

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Saying a sad farewell to your trekking team you begin your drive back to Marrakesh. You travel through the Valley of the Roses famous for its fields of pink roses seen in all their glory in May. Further on at Skoura you will see the immense lush palm groves of this fertile region and visit nearby Kasbah Amherdhil - hidden away in palm fields. This ancient kasbah, now a living museum, showcases traditional kasbah life over the centuries and was once home to a powerful landowner as well as featuring on the old 50 Dirham note. You continue to the town of Ouarzazate, centre of the lively Moroccan film industry, and visit the historic kasbah at Ait Benhaddou.

One of the best preserved kasbahs in Morocco it is a striking example of the traditional architecture of southern Morocco with mudbrick houses crowded together within its high, defensive walls. It is a Unesco World Heritage Site and familiar from many films including Gladiator.

The final leg of your journey takes you across the Tizi 'Tichka pass at 2,260m, before descending back to Marrakesh.

**Overnight: Riad Palais De Princesses or Similar, Marrakesh (Meals: B)**

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**Day 10: At leisure in Marrakesh till group transfer to the airport for flight home.**

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Depending on your flight time, you may have time to for a little exploration of Marrakesh. You could visit the Jardins Majorelle, the celebrated gardens of Yves St Lauren or visit Marrakesh's famous souk, where medieval-style backstreets and alleyways will transport you to a different age. Here traders offer a wealth of goods such as wood carvings, metalwork, clothing, carpets and spices, aimed at locals as well as tourists. This is a good place for souvenir and gift shopping, although if you have not already practised some haggling you might visit one of the city's 'fixed price' shops first to get a rough idea as to the prices you should expect to pay.



The transfer time to Marrakesh airport is between 20 and 30 minutes depending on traffic, but you will be transferred from your Riad in good time to check-in for your flight to London. You will arrive home later today.

**(Meals: B)**

### **Special notes**

#### **Animal welfare**

We work with an excellent partner in Morocco who cares about the mules and horses that they use to carry gear on the trek. They apply strict weight limits and have specially designed harnesses to distribute weight evenly and to prevent saddle sores. They do not use metal mouth bits and make certain that the mules and horses are well fed and watered. All the horses and mules are regularly checked by a vet.

#### **An extra mule**

On this trek an extra mule is taken that can be occasionally used as a riding animal or as a back up for emergencies.

## Our grading system

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The Happy Valley & M'goun Gorges Trek is graded as a Moderate/Vigorous trekking holiday, as described below.

### **Moderate**

Holidays in this grade typically involve 5 to 10 days of walking or trekking. They will often venture into more remote country and can cross mountain passes. Altitudes though are still relatively low, going no higher than around 4,300m/14,000ft. Accommodation can include simple hotels, tea houses, lodges and camping.

### **Vigorous**

Typically these trips involve 8 to 14 days (occasionally more) trekking in relatively remote landscapes. High passes up to 4,900m/16,000ft may be crossed (sometimes snow-covered) and there may also be glacier travel and peak ascents. Walking days can be between 5 and 8 hours with considerable ascents and descents. This grade also covers some European treks of shorter durations. Overnight stops on trek could be in tea houses, mountain huts or camping.

These holidays would suit enthusiastic hill/mountain walkers.

## Trip altitude

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**Important** - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend [www.medex.org.uk](http://www.medex.org.uk) as a good source of information.

## What the price includes

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Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

### What's included:

- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive bookings)
- ✓ Single, timed, group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ All sightseeing where specified
- ✓ Comfortable riad accommodation in central Marrakesh, on a twin share B&B basis
- ✓ 1 night gite accommodation on a twin share B&B basis
- ✓ A local English-speaking leader/guide
- ✓ All camping facilities and all meals on trek
- ✓ Camp staff to carry out all camp work
- ✓ 9 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 8 dinners.
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Kit bag

### Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

### What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees where applicable
- ✗ Lunch and evening meals in Marrakesh
- ✗ Optional trips
- ✗ Airport departure taxes (if applicable), excepting UK Departure Tax
- ✗ Tips

### Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.



## Your accommodation

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We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of accommodation is not available we will book an alternative of a similar standard.



### Riad Palais De Princesses or Similar, Marrakesh

This exceptional riad is well located; it is just an easy walk from here to the main square and souks of Marrakesh. It was formerly a princely residence and was restored five years ago with great care and to a very high standard. It is a lovely example of 'old Morocco' and has won many awards. It has 23 rooms, a pool, spa, hammam and roof terrace overlooking the High Atlas Mountains. Alternatively we may use Riad Challa or another riad or hotel of a similar standard.



### Gite Dar Itrane or Similar, Imelghas

This attractive gite has a range of facilities including a restaurant, lounge, gardens and delightful sun terrace overlooking the surrounding mountains and river of the Ait Bougamez Valley. Rooms are simple yet comfortable with private bathrooms and a tea/coffee maker included.



### Camp

On trek you will sleep in good sized three-person ridge/dome tents (with two-person occupancy) equipped with foam mattresses. A dining tent with table and stools/chairs will be provided, along with a toilet tent and separate cook tent.

## Meal arrangements

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Bed and breakfast in Marrakesh, full board whilst on trek.  
9 x breakfasts, 7 x lunches, 8 x dinners

## Flight arrangements

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### Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

### Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

## Further information

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When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

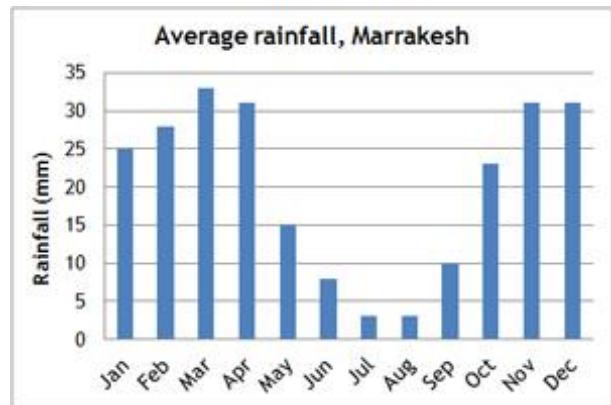
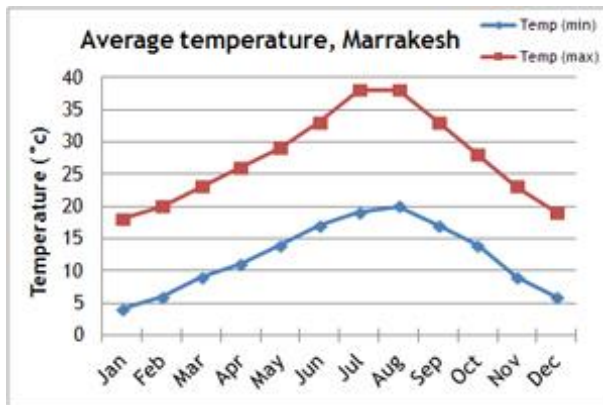
## The nature of adventure travel

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Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

## Climate information

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# Extensions

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## Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).



### Additional accommodation in Marrakesh

If you would like to extend your trip to Morocco, we would be happy to arrange additional nights' accommodation in Marrakesh for you, either at the Riad Palais de Princesses or Riad Challa, or one of the other luxuriously appointed Riads that have opened up in recent years.

### Essaouira

If you would like some seaside relaxation after your trek why not head to the atmospheric town of Essaouira located on Morocco's wild Atlantic coastline. Essaouira has a laid back atmosphere, long sandy beaches, a picturesque fishing port and an impressive ancient fortified Medina. Our Essaouira extension includes hotel options by the beach or in the Medina and all transfers to and from Marrakesh.



## Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

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- Unique to Mountain Kingdoms, this trek has been designed for its scenery, variety and excitement.
- We include visits to two historic kasbahs and a drive through the Valley of the Roses.
- We use a centrally located riad in Marrakesh that has loads of charm and character as well as being a good base for exploration.
- Trek in comfort. We do not cut corners on our service. Our camp equipment includes chairs/stools and table for meals, making for more relaxing and comfortable evenings.
- In a country where there are many unqualified guides operating, we employ only trekking guides and city guides, as appropriate, who are fully licensed by the Moroccan authorities.
- Animal welfare is paramount to us and our local partners. The mules and horses used for portering gear on this trek are extremely well looked after and have strict weight limits, special harnesses and bits. They are also regularly checked by a vet.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and other exciting activities including time in the coastal town of Essaouira.
- The extensive experience of our office team, combined with the knowledge, contacts and attention to detail of our local partners, means you are assured of a high quality holiday.
- Our MD Steve Berry and Reservations Manager, Seraphina have both trekked through the M'goun Gorges. They would be glad to talk to you about the detail of either this trip or any of the other tempting tours and treks we offer in this part of the world.
- Our maximum group size is 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects often associated with larger trekking groups.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for flight options, quotes and further information.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com) or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

## What we say

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*A trip of two parts - hiking in the mountains and over a 3400m pass, then the last two days wading the M`Goun Gorge, unlike anything I had done before. Camping was in single tents and the crew ere excellent with their mules. Food on trek was superb, a surprise every day, even a coked lunch on the trail every day.*

*-Trevor Lunness, Lancs*

*Fantatstic trek in the High Atlas, with an astonishing passage of the M'goun gorges.*

*-CL, North Yorks*



*The Guide was very knowledgable the trip is very well organised and interesting,each day is different,The food on trek was delicious and very varied nothing was repeated also plenty of it,The Muleteers were excellent ensuring the camp was always set up on Arrival. A relaxing holiday.*

*-Julie, Lancs*



*The trek described here is the result of myself, my wife, and some friends trekking down through the M'Goun Gorges in May 2022 and I can also unreservedly say that I too think this is one of the best treks I have ever done in Morocco, and the gorges are as spectacular as any I have seen anywhere else in my travels. I hope my own recommendation sets you on the trail to the Happy Valley & the M'goun Gorges and that you have as much enjoyment as we had in this sensational place.*

*-Steve Berry, MD, Mountain Kingdoms*

# Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

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## **Truly independent**

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

## **Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality**

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

## **Complete financial security**

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

## **No Surcharge Guarantee**

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

## **Award winning Responsible Tourism**

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).

## **Genuine small group travel**

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

## **Loyalty Discount**

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

## **Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier**

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

## **Comprehensive information**

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit [www.tourismdeclares.com](http://www.tourismdeclares.com)

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

### Carbon Offsetting

#### Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

#### Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

### Reducing Carbon Emissions

#### Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

#### Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

