



This prospectus sets out the contents of the tour and together with the Booking Conditions and Booking Form is the basis of our contract with you.

Morocco – High Atlas Traverse

7 - 21 March 2009

Tour 0867

This is a moving-on hotel based tour traversing the High Atlas Mountains from north to south involving daily ascents of 1000-1500 metres. As the gradients are not severe this tour is suitable for regular cyclists. The exotic nature of the towns and spectacular landscapes offer numerous possibilities for sight seeing. From the ancient capital of Marrakech we follow the old trade route over the Atlas to the orange growing lands of the Sous Valley and the bustling souks of Taroudant, over the Anti Atlas to the shoe making town of Tafroute; then descend to the coastal plain and the surfing mecca of Taghazoute before traversing the final ranges and the desert back to Marrakech.

Itinerary

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| Sat 7 March | Meet at Marrakech airport. Taxi into Marrakech. Stay one night |
| Sun 8 March | Cycle from Marrakech to Ouirgane, crossing the scrub desert, climbing and descending through the gorges of Moulay Ibrahim before ascending the col (1218m) after Asni and descending into the narrow valley of Ouirgane, always with the High Atlas as a backdrop. Stay two nights. 65km |
| Mon 9 March | Rest day or cycle from Ouirgane to Imlil then back to Asni, then along the tortuous cliff-cut road to Imlil with terraced fields of grain across the river and vertical cliffs alongside. A continuous climb leads to the village where donkeys do the transporting and locals offer an array of products to buy. Return the same way. 61km |
| Tues 10 March | Cycle from Ouirgane to Tizi n'Test (2092m) following the road through isolated villages, gorges and via numerous hairpins to the plateau, culminating in a more relaxed ride to the col. Good views over the Souss Valley before a short descent to the hotel. Stay one night. 76km |
| Wed 11 March | Cycle from Tizi n'Test to Taroudant, starting with a stunning 1300m descent over 37km into the Souss valley then a flat ride through orange groves to the ancient walled town of Taroudant. Stay two nights. 93km |
| Thurs 12 March | Rest day. (Own evening meal.) |
| Fri 13 March | Cycle from Taroudant to Ait Baha through the orange groves of the Souss Valley before climbing to the plateau of Ait Baha. Stay one night. 98km |
| Sat 14 March | Cycle from Ait Baha via Tizi n'Takan (1552m), Tizi n'Mill (1742m) and Tizi n'Ameln (1708m) to Tafroute. A magical ride on a cornice road revealing hidden villages, terraced fields, wandering camels and the fortified village of Tinizgane. A 14km descent to Tafraoute. Stay two nights. 100km |
| Sun 15 March | Rest day or ride the oasis gorges 85kms return. |
| Mon 16 March | Cycle from Tafroute to Tiznit, leaving the town through a jumbled rock landscape descending through green valleys and a high plateau before arriving at the kasbah of Kedous situated on a promontory commanding the valley below. A swift descent onto the coastal plain of undulating rock desert before reaching the walled town of Tiznit. Stay one night. 110km |
| Tues 17 March | Cycle from Tiznit to Taghazoute along the flat desert road to the northern rocky coastline. A chance to swim in the sea or hire a board in the surfing mecca of Maroc. Stay one night. 115km |
| Wed 18 March | Cycle from Taghazoute to Immouzer, climbing gradually to the gorge of Paradise Valley with its palmeries and banana trees before climbing steeply through terraces and a high plateau with limitless views in all directions before the short descent to Immouzer. Stay one night. 59km |
| Thurs 19 March | Cycle from Immouzer to Argana, continuing to climb steadily between fields of grain, sharing a road with donkeys carrying loads to markets before reaching the final col with the Argana valley 1100m below. A switchback descent to Argana for the transfer to Marrakech. Stay two nights. 52km |
| Fri 20 March | Rest day in Marrakech. |
| Sat 21 March | Taxi to Marrakech Airport where the tour ends. |

Passports, Visas and Health

EU citizens must hold a passport that is still valid for at least six months at the end of the tour. Holders of non-EU passports are advised to check whether they require a visa.

There are no compulsory health-related requirements for UK and EU residents, but it is strongly recommended that you are vaccinated against typhoid, hepatitis, meningitis. Tetanus and polio vaccinations should also be up to date at the time of travel.

You should contact your doctor at least three months prior to travel to obtain these vaccinations and the latest advice to travellers.



Luggage carrying

There is no support vehicle on this tour, but Land Rovers are provided for the transfer of riders and cycles between Argana and Marrakech on Thursday 19 March.

Accommodation and meals

Twelve nights are in 2- to 4-star hotels (Moroccan Tourist Board grading system) with ensuite facilities on a half-board basis; two nights (Thursday 12 and Sunday 15 March) are in 1-star hotels with shared facilities on a bed and breakfast basis. All hotels are based on two people sharing twin bedded rooms. Some singles may be available at a supplement. Two of the hotels have swimming pools. Virtually all restaurants have vegetarian options.

Price £865

The price is based on a minimum number of 8 participants taking part in the tour and is calculated at a rate of 16.4 Dirhams to £1 sterling (based on exchange rates published by MSN Money on 25 September 2007; please note Booking Conditions, clause 4). If there are insufficient bookings by 22 December 2008 we will contact you and return all monies paid, though in certain circumstances the tour may still run at below minimum numbers but at the same price.

Price includes:

- 12 nights hotel accommodation on half-board basis, sharing rooms
- 2 nights hotel accommodation on bed & breakfast basis, sharing rooms
- Transfer of cycles and riders by Land Rover between Argana and Marrakech
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price does not include:

- Travel to and from the tour
- Taxis to and from Marrakech airport
- Evening meals on two nights
- Drinks with evening meals
- Lunches or refreshments at morning and afternoon stops
- Entry fees at any attractions visited
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance
- Single occupancy supplement (£10 per night, subject to availability)

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you are adequately insured for this tour.

Whether you already hold a policy or will be taking out a new one, the cover it offers must be comparable to that stated in clause 8 of the Booking Conditions, and you must complete the enclosed Insurance Declaration Form and return it with your Booking Form.

CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours Ltd can accept no responsibility for any costs you may incur due to insufficient insurance cover.

Payment schedule

A deposit of £465 per person must accompany the Booking Form, with the final balance of £400 per person to be paid just over ten weeks prior to departure, by 22 December 2008. Cheques should be made payable to **CTC Tours** or complete the credit/debit card slip in the booking pack..

Cancellations

Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

Written notice received:	Cancellation charge:
Before 22 December 2008	Deposit (£465)
22 December 2008 through to departure	100% (£825)

To make a booking

Complete, sign and return the Booking Form together with your deposit and the relevant part of the Travel Insurance Declaration Form **directly to the leader** (address on Booking Form).

LEADER'S INFORMATION SHEET

The information below is given by the tour leader to help enquirers decide if the tour is suitable for them.

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The area covered by the Tour

South of Marrakech stand the two mountain ranges of the High and the Anti Atlas. The High Atlas is snow covered for most of the winter. Rivers have cut remarkable gorges through them offering suitable sites for villages and providing shelter for the cedar forests, which were once dominant. The landscape is arid and uncompromising, which may account for the architecture of the Berber population who inhabit the region. Fortified villages (ksars) and houses (kasbahs) are revealed against the blue skies. Many have fallen into ruins whilst others encourage the traveller to wander through them. The rivers are seasonal, having water in them resulting from snow melt. Oases and palmeries are found where the underground springs have been tapped for their water, producing a rich green tapestry against the backdrop of sand and rock.

We begin the tour in Marrakech (ancient city of the kings) famous for its souks (markets) and the daily evening food market both of which are a joy to wander through. Travelling south we climb over the Atlas via the Tizi n'Test (2092m) before descending rapidly to the Sous Valley (noted for its orange groves) and into the town of Taroudant. A further traverse of the mountains follows a ridge high above villages built upon rocky outcrops before reaching the town of Tafroute, famous for its everyday traditional leather shoes. From here there is a descent through tortuous rock formations to the coastal plain and a chance to go surfing at Taghazoute. The final climb leads from the coast to Immouzer famous for its numerous cascades before the last descent to the desert plain and a vehicle transfer back to Marrakech.

Rides and rest days

Breakfast (very French in the hotels, with lots of bread, jams, tea, coffee etc) will be around 0700, hoping to be loaded and on the road between 0730 and 0800. During the morning we'll find a convenient place for tea and then lunch around midday. You can buy bottled drinking water at roadside stalls and hotels. On shorter days we should arrive at the hotel early to mid afternoon allowing time to explore. Evening meal is normally served around 1900.

On most days there is around 1000m of ascent, sometimes more, but the gradients are not severe and the road surfaces are good. The roads linking these isolated settlements tend to follow the gorges and then climb over the ridges and cols into another valley system.

We all ride at different speeds, and this also varies depending upon how we feel on the day. The ascents, culture shock, heat, altitude and change of diet all affect the way we perform. I tend to ride through the group but stop on the top of passes to regroup. It is not essential that you try and keep up with everyone. Just ride at your own speed and enjoy it. If you are having a bad day, you will be supported.

Detailed route descriptions will be sent with the final tour information approximately 3 weeks before the tour starts.

Travel

The tour starts in Marrakech, and therefore you must make your own arrangements to travel there. Detailed instructions re travel between the airport and the hotel in Marrakech will be given prior to the tour.

Airlines that fly to Morocco include:

www.easyjet.com

www.britishairways.com

www.ryanair.com

www.atlas-blue.com

Accommodation / Meals

Accommodation is in Category 2- to 4-star hotels of the Moroccan Tourist Board grading system. They are a mixture of traditional long-established hotels, together with newer ones. All have en suite facilities except the auberge on top of the Tizi n'Test (the only accommodation) and the Hotel Atlantique at Taghazoute where the facilities are shared. The hotels at Ouirgane and Immouzer also have pools.

Morocco is famous for its couscous, a coarsely ground wheat flavoured with aromatic spices. Accompanying this are the dishes made in tajines. These are round, shallow earthenware pots with a tall conical lid in which meat; vegetables etc are cooked slowly for several hours in their own juices. Prunes and almonds are a favourite addition to any meal as is the flat bread with its distinctive flavour.

The local tea is refreshing, being a mixture of Green Gunpowder Tea into which a bush of mint is placed followed by tons of sugar. It's great for getting over the mountains or sitting in a square people watching.

Lunch stops vary from traditional local stalls offering omelettes to 4-star tourist hotels offering a wide range of food. As lunches and tea stops are not included in the price, I will take a kitty from you to cover this which will be replenished as and when needed.

Group information

The maximum group size will be 14 including the leader.

Smokers are welcome on the tour provided they agree not to smoke in shared bedrooms, or at the dining table whilst others are eating.

Weather and clothing

At this time of year it should be pleasantly warm, with temps around 25C, but rain is a possibility. The temperatures at night in the mountains will fall rapidly as the sun goes down. A fleece and long trousers for the evening are fine.

We are guests in a Muslim country (although used to tourists for many years) and so dress accordingly in the towns. Shorts and sun tops are ideal for riding in, but have a baggy t-shirt to put on when we stop for drinks etc. Sun cream is a must, as is a covering for your head.

Cycles / Equipment

A touring cycle, hybrid or lightweight ATB is suitable, but this must be in good working order, especially the brakes. A bottom gear of 20-24 inches or less is recommended. Mudguards are optional. As you will have to carry all your luggage, the minimum of luggage and a sturdy carrier are essential. You should have ridden your cycle fully laden before the tour to ensure you are happy with its handling. Lights will not be necessary. Each participant will be expected to bring and carry sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs.

Maps

Michelin Editions du Voyage No:959 Maroc 1:1,000,000
Lonely Planet Morocco 5th Edition, 2001

You should carry a map in case you become separated from the group. The route has been planned using the above Michelin Map, available from Stanfords, Long Acre, Covent Garden, London (Tel 0207 836 1321, www.stanfords.co.uk) or from The Map Shop, Upton on Severn (Tel:01684 593146; www.themapshop.co.uk).

Travel Insurance

Information on CTC Cyclecover Travel Insurance is available from CTC (0870 873 0068) or can be found at www.cyclecover.co.uk.

Before booking you should check the Foreign Office 'Travel Advice by Country' at www.fco.gov.uk or on 0845 850 2829.

About the leader

I am a climber, mountaineer, sea canoeist and long distance rider. I have climbed and trekked through the Pyrenees, Alps, Norway and the Himalayas of Nepal and Ladakh, and I also ran an outdoor centre on the Isle of Mull. I have cycled through many parts of the world for extended periods and have been leading CTC tours for some years.

Pete Jarvis

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