

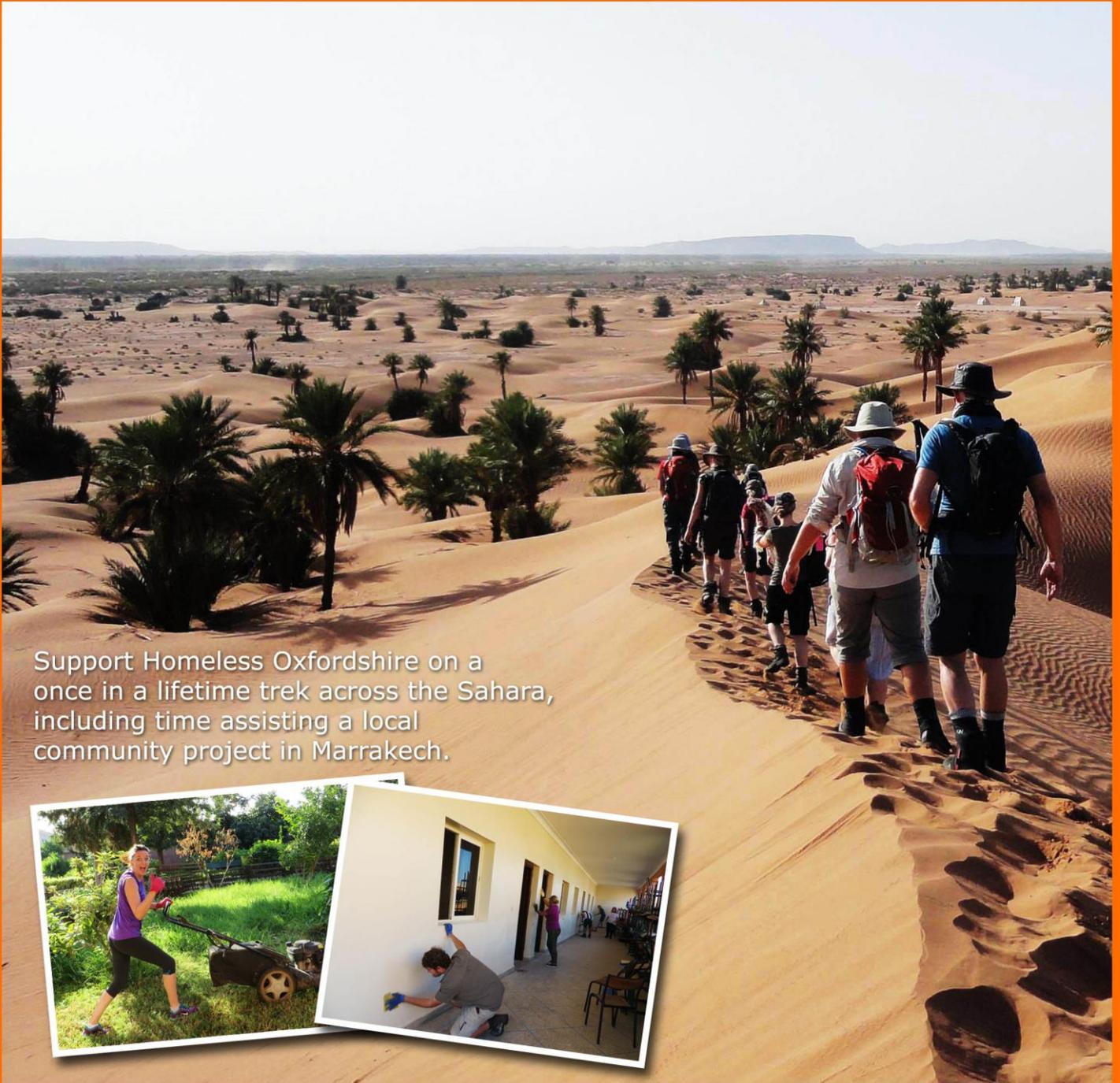
Supporting Oxfordshire Homeless Charities

Sahara Challenge

7 - 14 November 2020

Homeless Oxfordshire

Housing today, hope for tomorrow



Support Homeless Oxfordshire on a once in a lifetime trek across the Sahara, including time assisting a local community project in Marrakech.



homelessoxford



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Registered Charity number 297806

Homeless Oxfordshire (Registered Charity no. 297806) is acting as an agent for The Different Travel Company 6706. The flight-inclusive trip in this brochure is financially protected by the ATOL scheme. When you pay you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate. Please ask for it and check to ensure that everything you booked (flights, hotels and other services) is listed on it. Please see our booking conditions for further information or for more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: caa.co.uk.



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Trip overview

Morocco

Situated in North West Africa, the Kingdom of Morocco is a country with a population of over 35 million people. Morocco has a diverse geography with both Atlantic and Mediterranean coastlines in addition to a rugged mountainous and desert interior. The mighty Atlas Mountains and vast Sahara Desert make Morocco an adventure lover's paradise, and Marrakech is a wonderful place to visit with its spicy aromas, peaceful mosques, diverse entertainers and a cacophony of merchants in the bustling medina.

Sahara

The Sahara covers an area of over 3,600,000 square miles making it the third largest desert on the planet (after Antarctica and the Arctic respectively). It stretches from the Mediterranean and Atlantic to the north, the Red Sea to the east, and as far south as the Niger River. The Sahara is the world's hottest desert with record temperatures exceeding 50°C. Despite its inhospitable conditions, the Sahara has many species of flora such as acacia, palms and grass which have adapted to the arid conditions.

The Trek

This trek in the Moroccan Sahara gives you an insight into this vast and diverse landscape as well as the Berber way of life. You will spend two full days and two half days trekking across ancient dried up river beds, sand dunes and vast sun-baked plains. Camping each night gives you a chance to experience the stunning stars in the night sky (weather permitting) and the traditional Berber cuisine cooked by the team is second to none.

Berbers

The Berbers (or Amazighen – 'free people') are an ethnic group indigenous to North Africa whose culture can be traced back over 4,000 years. Traditionally, Berber men take care of livestock and Berber women take care of the home and make handicrafts for use around the home and to sell. The lifestyle is generally nomadic or semi-nomadic and there are large Berber communities in the rural parts of the country.

The Community Project

You will spend two days helping a community project in Marrakech. We anticipate you will help an organisation which supports vulnerable young people with education and vocational training after they have been orphaned, abused or rejected by their family. The organisation also supports elderly people whose families have abandoned them by creating a comfortable social environment for them to spend their golden years. Your tasks will vary depending on the need at the time but you're likely to get involved with refurbishment, redecorating and gardening which will make an instant impact at this incredible centre.

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What is the experience like?

Who accompanies us?

You will be accompanied by professional English-speaking Berber guides who have an excellent knowledge of culture and hiking in the region. The guides are first aid trained and will support you throughout your journey. You will also be accompanied by a team of support staff including cooks and camel handlers, and a Different Travel Company UK tour manager.

How tough is it?

The trek is rated moderately challenging for someone of a good fitness level. The terrain is a mixture of hard, flat sundried plains, dried up ancient river beds, wide sandy dune fields and hard rocky outcrops. Temperatures pose a specific challenge with temperatures historically reaching 35°C. You must be of a good fitness level before departure, to ensure fast recovery each day.

What is the climate like?

Temperatures can range from 25°C to 35°C during the day, and drop to around 0°C at night however you must be prepared for variations to this which are out of our control. Weather during the trek will be dry but there may be some strong winds. Rain, although very rare, is not impossible. Please note: the temperatures and conditions above are historically accurate but climate change can impact the seasons so you may experience uncharacteristic conditions during the trip which are out of our control. The guides will assess the situation and make decisions to ensure the best enjoyment and safety of the group.

How do we get to the desert?

To get to and from the desert requires long drives (approx. 9 hours including breaks) along winding mountain roads which offer stunning views of the snow-capped peaks and lush valleys. If you suffer from motion sickness you are advised to bring your usual anti-nausea medication with you. Regular stops are taken.

What is the camping like?

During the trek you will sleep in tents (two to a tent), or if the weather is good you can sleep outside under the stars; highly recommended! Foam sleeping mats are provided but you will need to bring a sleeping bag. Toilet facilities consist of a small toilet 'tent' covering a hole in the ground. There are no showers or bathing facilities in the desert so you must bring a pack of baby wipes.

What is the food like?

During the trek meals are cooked by a chef who will prepare Moroccan dishes. Breakfast and lunch will be eaten alfresco, and evening meals will be in a mess tent at camp. Plates, mugs, cutlery and other equipment are provided. While staying in Marrakech (and Ouarzazate if applicable) meals will be at the hotel, the project or at local restaurants.



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Practical information

Who can take part?

The minimum age is 18. It may be possible to participate if you are 16 or 17 years old but you must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. There is no upper age limit. The ideal candidate would be fit, healthy and determined, open to adventure and adaptable to unexpected changes.

Medical Declaration

A medical form must be completed by everyone upon registering, and any pre-existing conditions, medications used and other medical issues **must** be noted and (if relevant) signed by your GP.



Trip cost

£375 registration fee + £1995 minimum fundraising for Homeless Oxfordshire.

Your fundraising must be completed by 14th August 2020.

What is included?

- ✓ Return flights from London (inc. current taxes and fuel surcharges),
- ✓ Transfers and transport in Morocco
- ✓ Accommodation in hotels (4 nights)
- ✓ Tents and sleeping mats on trek (3 nights)
- ✓ All meals as specified
- ✓ Local guides, camels and camel handlers on trek
- ✓ Project co-ordination and materials
- ✓ Different Travel UK tour manager.

What is excluded?

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Tips (£20-30pp)
- ✗ Personal expenses (e.g. drinks, souvenirs etc.)
- ✗ Vaccinations

Is the trip ATOL protected?

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Any questions?

For more details please contact Lorraine on 07384 469995, email LorraineEmms-Clements@homelessoxfordshire.uk, or visit homelessoxfordshire.uk.

Itinerary

Day 1 (Saturday 7 November 2020): London to Marrakech

We fly together to Marrakech where we are met by our guide and transfer to our hotel for the night. Depending on flight arrival times we may start the journey to the desert today and stay in Ouarzazate tonight (approx. 4-5 hours).

Meals: Dinner.

Day 2 (Sunday 8 November 2020): Marrakech to Sahara

If staying in Marrakech we set off early, crossing the Atlas Mountains and following ancient caravan routes into the Sahara, stopping for lunch in Ouarzazate on the way (journey time approx. 9 hours including stops.) If starting in Ouarzazate the journey to the desert takes approximately 4-5 hours. This afternoon we will arrive in the desert and be welcomed by the rest of the trek team and the camels before commencing our trek, stopping overnight to camp under the stars of the Sahara. Approx. trek distance: 5km. Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

Days 3-4 (Monday 9 – Tuesday 10 November 2020): Sahara Desert

Our trek continues through the desert as we traverse sand dunes and rocky, lunar landscapes for the next two days. We are aided by our local Berber team comprising of the guides, cook and camel owners (the camels are our porters, carrying our luggage and equipment). Each day you enjoy the varied Saharan landscape and learn about how important it is to respect and comply with the forces of nature in the desert. On average we will cover 15-20km per day but this will vary. As the trek progresses we learn how the nomadic people of the Sahara live: from cooking to sleeping out under the stars and reading the magnificent Saharan night sky.

Meals: B,L,D.

Day 5 (Wednesday 11 November 2020): Sahara to Oulad Driss to Marrakech

This morning it's the final leg of the trek to a small village where we bid farewell to the trek team and head back to Marrakech (approx. 9 hours' drive). Approx. trek distance: 5km.

Meals: B,L,D.

Day 6-7 (Thursday 12 - Friday 13 November 2020): Marrakech

After a good night's rest we spend two days assisting at the community project. Typical tasks include decorating, refurbishment, gardening or generally working to improve the environment. No experience is necessary, just a willingness to get involved.

Meals: B,L,D.

Day 8 (Saturday 14 November 2020): Marrakech to London

Depending on flight times, have some free time to explore Marrakech before your flight back to London.

Meals: Breakfast.

N.B. This itinerary may change due to unusual weather, the ability of the group and so on. We will do our best to keep to the itinerary but we cannot be held responsible for changes that occur outside of our control. In all circumstances your guide and tour leader will have the final say in the interest of the group's health and safety.



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Kit List

Essentials

- Passport + copy
- E-tickets
- ATM and credit card(s)
- Cash (£ Sterling)
- Travel insurance documents
- Pen for immigration forms
- LED head torch + batteries
- Sunglasses (ideally polarized)
- Adaptor (European 2 round pin)
- Camera + spare batteries
- Mobile phone + charger

Clothing and Footwear

- Hiking boots*
- Trainers/flip flops for camp
- Casual shoes for Marrakech
- Lightweight trek trousers
- Trek socks
- Underwear
- Non-cotton t-shirts
- Non-cotton long sleeve top/shirt
- Warm fleece or sweater
- Sun hat with brim
- Warm hat for night
- Gaiters (for the sand)
- Buff (www.buffwear.co.uk)
- Neck cooling 'Cobber'
- Casual clothing for Marrakech
- Swimwear for hotel

Hygiene

- Shampoo and conditioner
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Antiperspirant deodorant
- Shower gel / loofah / shave kit
- Wet wipes
- Toilet paper
- Hand sanitizer
- Sun block (high SPF)
- Hairbrush/comb
- Feminine care products
- Nappy bags (for used loo roll)

First Aid Kit

- Prescription medicine
- Insect repellent (50% DEET)
- Ibuprofen
- Paracetamol
- Plasters
- Blister plasters (e.g. Compeed)
- Imodium (Loperamide)
- Rehydration salts (Dioralyte)
- Antiseptic cream (e.g. Savlon)
- Anti-histamine cream/tablets
- Lip balm with SPF protection
- Zinc oxide tape
- Nail scissors/ tweezers
- Muscle rub (e.g. Deep Heat)
- Spare glasses/contact lenses*

Optional

- Video camera + charger
- Umbrella (for the sun)
- MP3 player/iPod
- Packing organisers
- Hiking pole(s)
- Portable power bank
- Books/ pack of cards

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag (comfort 0°C)
- Sleeping bag liner
- Ear plugs (essential)
- Pyjamas

Luggage

- Suitcase/rucksack for luggage
- Daypack (25-30l)
- Trek kit bag
- Combination padlocks

Eating and Drinking

- Energy snacks
- 2-litre bottle (e.g. CamelBak)
- plus 1-litre bottle **OR**
- 3x 1-litre water bottles
- Electrolyte tablets (e.g. NUUN)

Project equipment

- Old clothes
- Protective gloves (e.g. gardening gloves)
- Trainers or boots

***Please ensure you pack your hiking boots into your hand baggage in the unlikely event your checked luggage goes missing or is delayed.**

PLEASE NOTE: This list is just a guideline and is not exhaustive – it does not take into account your personal preference or requirements so please adapt this list accordingly. If you have any questions about anything on this packing list, please contact info@different-travel.com for more information.