



## Crossing the High Atlas Mountains

### MOROCCO

This **exhilarating horseback ride in Morocco** takes you on an unrivalled crossing of the High Atlas mountain range. You ride from the South to the North, through the large olive groves of Skoura and the rugged gorges of the Dades Valley to the remote valley of Ait Bougmez, one of Morocco's best kept secrets. See the famous waterfalls of Ouzoud which open out onto the plains of Marrakesh. You will discover the hidden **Morocco on horseback**, that is rich in cultural history, and encounter the Berber communities, some of which are still living nomadic lifestyles.

<b>Trail Riding</b>	<b>15 days (11 riding)</b>	<b>From £2,165</b>	
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This is a camping holiday with wonderful views



A riding holiday in Morocco



Riding over mountains and across valleys in the Atlas

## ITINERARY

### Highlights

- Ride well balanced Barb stallions, on this exclusive and wild trail ride as you traverse contrasting landscapes.
- Make your way through green valleys, canyons gauged out of orange-red rocks and the arid mountains of the High Atlas on your sure footed horse.
- Ride through villages perched on the mountainside and passed old cave-type dwellings.
- Experience good levels of service at the campsites during the ride

### Day 1 — 1 : EUROPE - MARRAKESH

Fly to Marrakesh. You will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel for the evening. Dinner will be taken at the hotel. If riders all have flights that arrive early into Marrakech, then it is possible that you will be taken directly to Skoura and spend the night in the palm grove instead of in Marrakesh. (Flights not included but can be arranged if you wish)

### Day 2 — 2: SKOURA – AGHBALOU - 4 hours riding

#### Moroccan Camp

You will be met in the hotel reception at 7 a.m. for the transfer to Skoura equestrian centre, where the horses are based. This is a journey of approx 246 km, between 4.5 to 5 hours drive through the Tizi n'Tichka. You can expect amazing views across the deep gorges and colourful mountainside. On arrival you will be allocated your horse, and will go on a short introductory ride to settle in the saddle to make sure everyone is happy with their horses before you start your expedition. You will ride across the peaceful olive groves of Skoura and the desert plateau of Ait Saïd Oumanssour.

Camp out this evening with the opportunity to spend your first night under the Moroccan stars. Everyone is required to help at camp: looking after the horses, feeding and watering, and helping setting up your tent. Your meals are cooked over the campfire but a team of talented cooks who always seem to produce the most delicious dishes with the most basic cooking facilities!

## Day 3 — 3: AGHBALOU - AGUERD - 5 hours riding

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 Moroccan Camp

Today you will ride through the Tamassent plateaus before arriving at Toundoute. Expect to be greeted with a superb view across the valley filled with almond trees. In the afternoon, good canters across a plateau take you to the village of Tiflit before climbing up the steep gorges to camp near the village of Aguerd.

## Day 4 — 4 : AGUERD - TAOUJGALT - 5h30 riding

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 Moroccan Camp

Your ride will take you along the wadi Nait Tounert. All along the wadi, you will encounter villages and cultivated terraces on both sides of the river. After lunch, you will cross desert plateaus before reaching the Azaghar N'Aiguer pass that towers above the valley. You will follow a small path, which brings you to your camp for the night in the beautiful countryside at 1900m.

## Day 5 — 5 : TAOUJGALT - AMESKER - 5h30 riding

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 Moroccan Camp

Today you are riding in the Dades Valley, discovering beautiful Ksour (fortified villages) with their traditional Berber architecture. The view is amazing with the green gardens and the red of the gigantic cliffs. You will camp further up in the Amesker gorge at 2100m.

## Day 6 — 6 : AMESKER - AFLAFAL - 6h30 riding

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 Moroccan Camp

Today you leave the Dades valley to start the ascent to the Tizi N'ait Ahmed pass which is at 3010 m. In the afternoon, descend to M'goun wadi, which crosses beautiful villages with many kasbahs enroute. Tonight you will camp at the bottom of the Aflafal springs at 2300 m.

## Day 7 — 7 : AFLAFALE - AIT BOUGMEZ - 5h riding

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After enjoying the cool waters of the M'goun gorge, you go up to the valley of Oulilimt following small mule tracks to the high mountain pass Tizi N'ait Imi pass (2905 m). You will enjoy the panoramic views of the high central Atlas and the valley of Ait Bougmez before you start the dizzy descent on the North side of the Atlas. You ride down to the inn where you are staying for the evening.

## Day 8 — 8 : AIT BOUGMEZ - NO RIDING

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Today is a rest day - at least, for the horses. You are off hiking in the happy valley- Ait Bougmez which is at the foot of the austere Jebel M'Goun (4,068 m). You will see fields, irrigated crops, orchards, villages with rustic architecture, everything is pleasing on the eyes. In the afternoon, you will have the choice between resting or going to meet the local community. Back to the inn for the night.

## Day 9 — 9 : AIT BOUGMEZ - SREMTE - 5h riding

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Today you ride up an easy path reaching the Tizi N'ait Ouriaat pass at 2600m. Enjoy the wide panoramic views over the valleys of the Atlas before stopping for a picnic lunch. In the afternoon you will ride down a well-known hiking track until you finally arrive to your destination for the night: the valley of Sremte.

## Day 10 — 10 : SREMTE - ISEK - 5h riding

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 Moroccan Camp

You follow the Assafene oued (riverbed) that leads you to shepherds huts before you reach an easy track. Your destination this morning is the village of Bernate and its gorgeous Ksar (a group of earthen buildings surrounded by high walls). This is where you stop for your picnic lunch, before you set out on horseback again in the afternoon with opportunities for a faster pace. Camp tonight will be at Isek.

## Day 11 — 11 : ISEK – IMI N'ZMAYZE - 6h riding

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 Moroccan Camp

You ride over mountain ridges and across old villages before you arrive to today's picnic spot, overlooking the Segate plain. In the afternoon, you follow wooded paths down to your camping spot for the night at Imi N'Zmayze.

## Day 12 — 12 : IMI N'ZMAYZE – TARASOUAD - 5h riding

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Another day in the saddle in the Atlas mountains. Always in the heart of the Berber tradition, the ride continues through the hills planted with olive and almond trees following mule tracks to the village of Sgate. In the afternoon, you ride across the plateaus of Wansoure and Bouhrazene.

## Day 13 — 13 : TARASOUAD - OUZOUD FALLS - 3h riding

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Take your last ride on horseback this morning to find the beautiful Ouzoud Falls. In the afternoon you will be given time to settle in to the guest house before you visit the waterfalls on foot.

## Day 14 — OUZOUD FALLS - MARRAKECH - No riding

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You will be transferred early this morning to Marrakesh (about a 3 hour drive). You will be taken to the hotel and the afternoon is free in Marrakesh where you can visit the souks, the medina, the Majorelle Gardens, and many other curiosities. Marrakesh is a beautiful and vibrant city, and captures the essence of modern Morocco perfectly, while maintaining a traditional, authentic character.

## Day 15 — 15 : MARRAKESH - EUROPE

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Transfer back to the airport for your flight back to Europe. (Flights not included but can be arranged if you wish)

### DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
02/06/2024	16/06/2024	£2,165	Open

## Price details

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- Flights or transportation to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.

- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double tent during the ride.

- Groups are composed of a minimum of 3 riders and a maximum of 12 international riders.

- Please note: the ride will also confirm for 2 riders on payment of a supplement of c. €500/£435/\$530 per person. Once the group has reached 3 people, we will remove this supplement from your invoice and refund you if you have already paid it.

- Single room supplement (tent and hotel) is €200/£175/\$210 for the hotel nights and tents. Single accommodation might not be guaranteed in Ouzoud, please contact us in advance.

- Transfer is included for an arrival in Marrakech before 4:00 pm on the first day (transfer is leaving at 5:00 pm) and after 12:00 noon from Marrakech on the last day. For flights not matching the transfer times, a private transfer can be organised at an extra cost of €25/£20/£30 each way.

- If you weigh more than 90kg or are over 1.95m tall then please contact us to enquire about a suitable horse.

Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

## Price includes

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### SUPPORT TEAM

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1 English-speaking horse guide

1 backup guide

### LOGISTICS

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1 vehicle and driver

1 cook  
1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

### **TRANSPORTATION**

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Van or 4W vehicle  
Return airport transfers (if your flight times don't match the group's)

### **ACCOMMODATION**

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Tents and foam mattresses during the ride  
Local, standard hotel in double or triple rooms

### **MEALS**

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Full board accommodation from dinner on D1 to breakfast on D15 (except lunches in Marrakesh)  
Bottled or filtered water

## Price doesn't include

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### **EXTRA**

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Gratuities to the local team

### **MEALS**

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3 lunches to your own account on D1, D14 and D15.  
Extra drinks and personal extras (laundry...)

### **TRANSPORT**

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International flights

### **INSURANCE**

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Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation  
Visas and personal purchase

## Optional

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### **ACCOMMODATION**

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Single supplement - see price details above

## EQUESTRIAN INFO

### Horses

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Barb and Barb cross Arab horses (some are stallions, some are geldings), which have huge stamina, great will and are forward going yet very biddable. With their small feet, big hearts and fast paces, these horses are ideally suited to this landscape. These horses must be ridden with light hands and very gently into the contact.

### Guide & local team

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You will be guided by local Moroccan's who are familiar with the horses and the landscape. They will be accompanied by grooms. At least one of the guides will speak English but the grooms may only speak French and Arabic.

### Minimum riding ability

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#### **MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY**

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You should be a capable rider who is happy riding outdoors in all paces. You should be able to control your horse (speed and direction) in walk, trot and canter whilst maintaining a light hand.

If you weigh more than 90kg or are over 1.95m tall then please contact us to enquire about a suitable horse.

## **PACE**

There is a lot of walking on this trail because of the mountainous landscape, however there are opportunities to trot and canter each day where the terrain allows.

## **TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION**

You will be expected to assist with grooming, tacking up and untacking your horse each day whilst out on the trail. It would also be appreciated if you could help with camp tasks such as putting up tents or watering and feeding the horses.

## **TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE**

You need to be physically fit for long hours in the saddle in the sun and at high altitudes. The terrain is varied to include steep ascents/descents and there may be holes to avoid. You need to be able to mount and dismount your horse whilst on rocky paths so as to assist your horse during hard climbs and tricky descents - you will likely be asked to dismount and lead your horse on foot.

Temperatures are cooler in the mountains than in Marrakech because of the altitude but it can still be hot and very sunny in summer. Please remember that there is always a level of unpredictability when riding in the mountains and you may experience wind, cold or even storms.

Having previous experience of riding a trail of several days is compulsory on this ride. It is of particular importance to ensure you are comfortable and balanced when riding at speed across rough terrain and open spaces. You also need to be fit enough to walk on foot and lead your horse in the mountains.

You will ride across inhabited valleys and cross desert mountains. The support vehicle may not be able to reach you every day, so please make sure to pack your saddlebags sensibly (water, sunscreen, lip balm). On the days where the vehicle can't reach you, a train of pack mules takes over so it is important you bring a soft bag rather than a hard-sided suitcase.

Visiting a new country offers the opportunity to meet other cultures with different mentalities, therefore it is important to accept these differences and respect the local way of life.

## **EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT**

Forestier trail riding saddles and comfortable tack.

Saddlebags are provided.

We recommend our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard and you should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

## **TRAVEL INFO**

### **COMFORT**

In camp: two man tents with mattresses, communal tent for meals, a hot shower and separate toilet tent.

In Marrakesh: a standard hotel in double rooms.

### **MEALS**

A cook travels with you and prepares all of the meals. You will usually have a cold lunch and a hot evening meal when camping. Meals are typical Moroccan cuisine.

Water is provided but you should bring your own bottle.

Special diets can be accommodated, however please note that some foods can be difficult to find in Morocco. Certain diets may incur a supplement (gluten-free diets can be accommodated at a supplementary charge of €200/£180/\$220 for instance). All dietary requirements must be specified at the time of booking.

### **CLIMATE**

The Atlas mountains have a typical mountainous climate with cold winters and the rides don't run during the winter months.

During the summer months the mountains offer a good alternative to the heat of the desert or Marrakech. The nights are cool without being cold (9-14c depending on altitude) and the days are usually sunny with temperatures around 25c. In short, the climate is ideal from May to September, with temperatures dropping in March/April and October.

Marrakech has a Mediterranean climate which is usually hot summers and a clear blue sky, with cold winters. The best season to visit this city is

Spring/Autumn when the temperatures are pleasant all day (22-30c).

## TIPS

It is customary, as a sign of thanks to tip the local team. We recommend a tip of €50/£45 per week, but you should give what you feel comfortable with. We recommend giving the tips to your guide who can distribute them amongst all of the staff members.

## PACKING LIST

**IMPORTANT:** Please don't take a hard sided suitcase. Your luggage should be soft sided and you should pack it into two bags if it weighs more than 15-20kg so it's easier for the team to transport between camps

### Head

- Equus Journeys strongly recommend that you wear a riding helmet and that you take your own to ensure a correct fit.
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana

### Upper body

- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun and dust
- T-shirts
- Fleece, jumper or jacket - the evenings can be cold
- Waterproof jacket - the rains can be difficult to foresee and it's better to be prepared. Layering is key to cope with the fluctuations in temperature between day and night
- Casual clothes for the evening

### Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Shorts for lazy lunchtimes
- Casual clothes for the evening
- Swimsuit

### Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps as long chaps/long boots can get very hot.
- Sandals, flip-flops or trainers for moving around the camp
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun whilst riding

### Nightwear

- Thermals are a good option for sleeping in, or a t-shirt and shorts for warmer nights
- A woolly hat when camping (nights can be cold)
- Sleeping bag - we recommend a comfort factor of 0°C/-5°C. We also recommend taking a silk or fleece liner for an extra layer

### Other useful items

- Towel. Camping towels will pack lighter and dry more easily
- Sarong (for going to/from the shower tent)
- Water bottle (1.5 litre or two x 1 litre)
- Hand sanitiser
- Wet wipes for when showers aren't possible
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around camp at night
- Toilet paper and small plastic bags for taking rubbish away

### In your luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant unless they are less than 100ml and all bottles can fit in a small, clear, plastic ziplock bag.
- Small penknife

### In your hand luggage

- Any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Your riding hat

### Medical kit

- Sunscreen and lip balm - must be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Rehydration sachets (dioralyte or similar)
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Ear plugs, particularly if you are a light sleeper
- Micropur or similar water purification tablets

#### Our Recommendations

- Please don't take a hard sided suitcase. Your luggage should be soft sided and you should pack it into two bags if it weighs more than 15-20kg so it's easier for the team to transport between camps
- Take a second, smaller bag to pack things you may need during the day such as a book or sunscreen then you can easily access it during the long lunch break. You are not allowed to ride with your backpack but saddlebags are provided.
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .