



## **Pre-course Dossier v1**

### **Morocco Mountain Medicine Expedition**

**23 – 29 September 2019**

Welcome to the Team!

#### **Style & overview of the course**

This note will help you decide to join us and prepare if you do! This dossier does not aim to repeat the information available online and under DOWNLOADS on the course webpage <https://wildernessmedicaltraining.co.uk/medics-series-courses/morocco-mountain-medicine-expedition/>

See the **DOWNLOADS** section on the course webpage to access:

- This dossier
- Participant Declaration
- Morocco 2019 Teaching Team details
- Pre-course reading bundle

This note tells you **what you need to know, do and pack to prepare**. Please read it after booking (and preferably before emailing your questions!).

It's a brilliant week in a special place. Delegates (up to 30) are mainly doctors but OHPs, medical students and laypeople sometimes attend. We are careful to promote this trip as an "expedition". This implies that flexibility is needed to cope with any uncertainties. Morocco is a poor country and facilities are basic and unreliable. It is NOT a "tour" which you can dip in or out of or where we can accommodate special requests. If you appreciate this you will enjoy the expedition much more. Think TEAM!

#### **Course structure, content and Toubkal ascent description**

Please see the course webpage.

#### **WMT teaching team**

Download details of the great teaching team we have lined up from the course webpage.

#### **Fitness to participate – declaration form**

You will be required to submit a "**participant declaration**" form on arrival. Download it from the course webpage now please and contact us immediately if you have anything to disclose such as any serious medical condition or concern. What you might consider a medical condition under control at home might pose different challenges in a remote country with poor medical facilities and no mountain rescue at high altitude. Better to discuss this with us first so we can investigate and advise.

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This is good governance. If you have nothing to declare in advance, please do not send us your form. Bring it with you.

### WMT terms & conditions

By booking, you have agreed to our terms and conditions here:

<http://wildernessmedicaltraining.co.uk/terms-and-conditions/> These terms apply even if you wish to cancel or defer your participation due to injury/illness, failure to obtain leave, changes in rotas, failure to obtain a travel visa (if required) or any other reasons.

### Inbound flight details & airport transfers to Imlil 23 September – action point

Afternoon/early evening Marrakesh (Menara) airport to Imlil group transfers are included **23 September**. Use [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net) – to search for flights.

If you arrive early, you'll have to wait or visit the city and return to the airport to meet a WMT transfer at a time we designate (it's an easy and cheap taxi ride). Our transfers do not meet every inbound flight delegates are on so waiting for others to arrive until there's a van/car load must be expected. You are not invited to arrive early at the Kasbah under your own transfer arrangements.

**The latest flight we will meet is EZY1891 from Manchester landing at 20.15.** It can take an hour or more to get through immigration and Imlil is 1.5 hours' drive away so it is a late arrival and not to be recommended. We strongly advise to arrive no later than 4pm.

Transfers outside of those offered are at your own organisation and expense.

### End of expedition – return flights

We formally conclude the expedition in Imlil at lunch on Saturday 28 September after we have descended from the refuge. Coaches await us and we aim to be in Marrakesh by 5pm. It is possible to fly home that night (suggest flights no earlier than 8pm) but an evening meal, hotel and breakfast on Sunday is included.

### Passport validity & visas

If you have a British, American, Canadian or Irish passport, you don't need a visa for Morocco but your passport must have six months' validity remaining when you enter the country. If you have any other passport you should check that you don't need a visa via this web link:

<http://www.wordtravels.com/Travelguide/Countries/Morocco/Visa>

### Insurance – action point

Insure this trip now! You must be covered trekking to 4167m. Check if your insurer considers this course a "work" trip which they might not cover. Most "free" travel insurance you get with a credit card do not include "hazardous activities". WMT will not advance funds or make any financial guarantees on your behalf to facilitate your rescue, medical treatment or repatriation. <http://www.snowcard.co.uk/> for UK residents only are reputable but be sure any policy covers your personal needs.

### Fitness

Fitness is vital to being a mountain medic. People who aren't used to walking for five days straight really struggle in Morocco. Don't let it be you. Get active now.

### **Travel health advice**

Visit this webpage for pre-travel medical advice:

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/morocco.htm>. A vaccination certificate is not required.

### **Paying the course fee balance**

Please promptly pay any balance of course fees when you are requested to via the automated database. You can also pay the balance any time – just ask us for an online payment link.

### **Facebook event**

Join this course on FB and use it as a pre-course forum –

<https://www.facebook.com/events/401909393714696/>

### **Whatsapp group**

Much nearer the time we will set up a Whatsapp group and invite delegates to join this.

### **Accommodation**

In true expedition style, you will be accommodated for 3 nights in communal “Berber salons” at the Kasbah (single gender rooms not guaranteed). These are plush, comfy rooms, with narrow beds more akin to sofas. You should read this useful page to acquaint yourself with this style of sleeping quarters

<http://www.kasbahdutoubkal.com/accommodation/kas/berbersalon.html>. There is also the popular option to sleep on the many roof terraces under the stars (with mattresses and all bedding/pillows provided of course). Single occupancy, private rooms or rooms for couples cannot be provided. Accommodation in the mountain refuge (2 nights) is more basic but clean and warm. Blankets are provided. A sheet sleeping bag liner is highly recommended for the refuge.

<http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/c-169-sleeping-bag-liners.aspx> about £12 for a cotton liner.

In Marrakesh we stay in a traveller’s hotel and delegates will be in twin, triple or quad en suite rooms for one night after the trek. We normally use Riad Omar or the Islane Hotel near the Jemaa el Fna souk.

Please do not contact these hotels using any reference to WMT. When delegates have done so to arrange extra accommodation, it always confuses our arrangements with them. In fact, we make have our Kasbah partners deal with these arrangements so we don’t even have direct contact with these hotels. We will ask you ON ARRIVAL if you need extra post-expedition accommodation and will try to sort it then but we can’t guarantee this so make your own plans if certainty is important to you.

### **Meals & special diets**

The first meal included in the fee is supper on Monday if arriving Imlil by 8pm (or just soup later or nothing if arriving at midnight!) The last meal is breakfast Sunday.

Please advise WMT of any special dietary needs but note that vegan diets or gluten free supplies cannot be provided for. The Kasbah says “We cater for vegetarians but the meals may be more limited” (rice, couscous and vegetables). We have little control of meals served once we’re up the mountain at the mountain refuge. We suggest everyone brings some personal favourite snacks for the mountain phase including two servings of porridge (add boiling water type) to supplement the classic French style breakfast of bread and Laughing Cow cheese which isn’t fuel enough for

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mountain climbing. It's possible to buy chocolate and Pringles on the trail and at the refuge. All meat served is halal.

**Alcohol** is NOT available at the Kasbah but they have a "bring your own" policy. Alcohol is not permitted at the mountain refuge though.

### **Responsible travel in Morocco**

Please read this page <https://www.kasbahdutoubkal.com/atlas/community/guide.html>

### **Dress code**

The dress code is informal. Women – please consider conservative clothes (long sleeves and trousers). Sleeveless sports tops and form fitting leggings attract unwarranted attention.

**Extra costs** – most everything is included in the fee except extra personal drinks and snacks on the trail, drinks in Marrakesh and your taxi from Marrakesh back to the airport at the end of the expedition.

### **What you must bring**

- head torch
- socks, pants, t's
- warm hat
- thermal shirt
- fleece jacket
- waterproof jacket and trousers
- gloves
- sun glasses
- sun hat
- water bottle/bladder
- sun block/insect repellent
- insurance details/cash/credit card
- lightweight duvet "puffer" jacket or vest
- daypack/backpack (20-30 litres) – see below
- trekking shoes or boots (not just trainers)
- sandals / flip flops
- swim suit - for the hamman (sauna)
- personal meds, toiletries, ear plugs
- water purification supplies – normally we can supply delegates a BeFree filter water bottle at cost (details to follow 8 weeks before the expedition).
- antiseptic hand gel / wet wipes
- Compeed, foot tape or other blister supplies
- alcohol – optional

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- personal snacks, 2 x porridge
- trekking poles – highly recommended (not allowed in hand luggage)
- sheet sleeping bag liner (not a sleeping bag) – optional but recommended
- documents - proof of insurance/cash/credit card/passport

**Daypacks** – in 2018 we saw a range of unsuitable daypacks being used. One delegate carried a North Face duffel bag; others had “school” backpacks that were too small and didn’t have a waist belt or any straps/net pockets to attach additional equipment. There is some group equipment and food that is shared out for delegates to carry. You need spare capacity for this. You don’t want to look like a Christmas tree either with kit swinging off or have a pack so big that you’re tempted to fill it with extras.

Consult our detailed Gear Guide for more kit advice

<http://wildernessmedicaltraining.co.uk/gear-guide/>

Towels are provided at the Kasbah and the Marrakesh hotel only. Washing facilities are very limited at the refuge – bring wet wipes. Please follow this list. You really do need a warm hat, gloves and waterproofs! Layers are always better than one bulky garment. The daily temperatures can range widely. **You can leave excess belongings at the Kasbah during the trekking phase.** You don’t need any climbing equipment, sleeping mattresses, tents etc. We don’t have access to spare clothing or shops locally. Leave valuables/jewellery at home. If in doubt, leave it out.

### **Charity project – bring used children’s winter clothing**

In 2017 and 2018 we asked delegates to bring good quality, clean children’s winter clothes to donate to the local community. Winters are harsh in the Atlas Mountains. Please join us this year in doing the same.

**CPD credits** We estimate this course is valid for at least 20 CPD credits.

## **RESEARCH & READING**

### **Pre-course reading**

There’s a pre-course reading bundle online at the course webpage (yes – we know it’s dated May 2016). Also, the Oxford Handbook of Expedition and Wilderness Medicine 2<sup>nd</sup> edition is a useful book. It’s also available as an iPhone app and Kindle book.

### **Country background information**

Surf the web and check out Lonely Planet

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/africa/morocco/>. Morocco is a Muslim kingdom which has a bearing on things like dress code, availability of alcohol, judicial and police powers etc. To help manage your expectations we encourage you to read Laura Irwin’s and Reza Noori’s review of their 2013 experience <http://www.theadventuremedic.com/courses/wmt-morocco-mountain-medicine-expedition-course/>

### **Other Morocco contacts**

The Kasbah du Toubkal’s UK owners run a Marrakesh based agency called [www.mountain-voyage.com](http://www.mountain-voyage.com) if you want to do other activities.

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### **WMT emergency contact telephone in Morocco**

Barry's UK mobile is +44 7967 032930.

**Changed your email address? Tell us!**

#### **Action points:**

- Download the participant declaration & contact us now with medical concerns
- Sort travel insurance now
- Tell us your inbound flight details as soon as you've booked flights (getting this info from you often drags on and we won't confirm any transfer times until we have everyone's details)
- Get fit!

We look forward to working with you.

Barry Roberts

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