

Dades Gorge

HIGH ATLAS MOUNTAINS

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TREK DESCRIPTION

Areas & location

Dades Gorge is located 30km north of the regional town of Boumalne de Dades, a 7 hour road journey from Marrakech on 'The Road of a Thousand Kasbahs'. Formed by millions of years of water erosion, the gorge is at its most dramatic just to the north of where you stay for the first night. The trek route then takes you through the spectacular scenery of the High Atlas Mountains with its high snow covered peaks looming over you.

Start point & access

Pre-arranged transport will take you to the start point of the trek, where you will spend your first night at the Gite d'Etape in Ait Youl.

End point & details on how to return

The trek ends in the village of Tabarkhacht, where you will stay the night at a local gite. Pre-arranged transport will collect you the following morning and take you on to the next phase of your expedition.

Evacuation summary

The immediate action of the Leader is to establish an evacuation route in consultation with the local trekking guide and In-country Agent. Means of evacuation may be by foot, vehicle, boat, pack-animal or air and could include improvised methods. In many destinations 'emergency services' are unreliable so private vehicles may be used to speed up the evacuation process. As soon as possible contact should be made with the Operations Centre who will assist you in organising the evacuation. Our international medical assistance partner will provide direction on which is the most appropriate medical facility, via the Operations centre, based on the nature of the incident. It's important to note that evacuation times are difficult to predict and are dependent on factors including terrain, time of day, availability of support, and the nature of the incident.

Evacuation Route

Likely evacuation destination: Boumalne de Dades or Marrakech
 Part/all of the evacuation is likely to involve walking/carrying
 Animal support may be an option
 Evacuation would likely be by retracing steps/continuing along the planned route
 There are multiple evacuation routes to different road-heads
 Part/all of the evacuation is likely to involve transfer by vehicle
 Air evacuation may be an option

LOGISTICS



Guides

A local, English-speaking guide is provided.



Support

Either a support vehicle or pack mules will carry your group kit and supplies. You are only required to carry your day sacks whilst trekking.



Accommodation

Camping and staying in gites (local guest houses).



Food

The trek is fully catered (breakfast, lunch and evening meals provided). No tranguis required. It is recommended that you bring some snacks to eat during the day.



Water

Challengers must be able to carry a minimum of 3 litres of water. Your guide will advise where to collect water from each day.



Tipping

A tipping contribution and muleteer bonus are included in your budget. Please tip the trek support team if you are happy with the service.



Extra equipment

Walking poles may be helpful but they are not essential.



Any further notes

An unladen emergency riding mule will be provided for the duration of the trek.



Maps (scale, accuracy)

www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/ams/southern_morocco/maps are 1:125 000- not the best quality but a useful reference.



Guidebooks/other sources of information

Rough Guides: The Rough Guide to Morocco, 2016.
 Lonely Planet: Morocco, 2014.
 Cicerone: Trekking in the Atlas Mountains, 2015.

DAY BY DAY

Day 1

Ait Youl to Iggherm-Aqdim



8hrs

APPROX. TOTAL
WALKING TIME



1860m

ALTITUDE



20km

APPROX.
DISTANCE

Today is a long day in terms of trekking, and you should aim to break camp in the early hours. Start at Ait Youl, from the gite follow the road north west for approximately 2kms, leave the road at the first large obvious wadi (Wadi Dades) travelling east. The terrain is dry and arid with very little water, and you gain height gradually. En route you will encounter Berber camps and caves. After approximately three hours you will stop for lunch just short of Tamgallouna; the lunch stop has shade, water and fantastic views of rock and mountain formations to the west overlooking Tamgallouna. After lunch your journey takes you north following the Oued Mgouna (River Mgouna). For the first part of the journey you will be following the river closely. After about 1.5 hours you cross the river by a log bridge, the route now starts to ascend following the escarpment to the west, en route you will encounter two rock steps. In low water it may be possible to miss out the escarpment. The escarpment will bring you to the campsite at Iggherm-Aqdim.

Overnight camp

Iggherm-Aqdim



Day 2

Iggherm-Aqdim to Alemldoun



5hrs

APPROX. TOTAL
WALKING TIME



1868m

ALTITUDE



12km

APPROX.
DISTANCE

From the campsite at Iggherm you will cross the River Mgouna which has a single log bridge which can be used to cross the river before Aqdim. At Aqdim the trail ascends west approximately 200m via a series of well-trodden switch backs. From the col the trail descends north-west mainly off-piste over rocky ground exposed in places with a short rock step as the trail reaches the valley floor and re-joins a well maintained vehicle track. After approximately 2.5 hours you'll encounter a small unnamed settlement; collecting water is possible here. From the settlement you'll cross the Alemldoun Plateau with fantastic views across the High Atlas under the magnificent gaze of Jebel Mgouna to the village of Alemldoun.

Overnight camp

Alemldoun



DAY BY DAY

Day 3

Alemdoun - Bou Targh'rar



6hrs

APPROX. TOTAL
WALKING TIME



1700m

ALTITUDE



18km

APPROX.
DISTANCE

The route from Alemdoun goes south, following the Assif Qati (Oleander) Gorge for approximately 1.5-2 hours to the village Agouti el Feuani. The gorge contains a river that flows all year and is fed by the Mgoun Massif. There are signs of erosion and that the gorge floods; there is a worn water mark high on the gorge wall. Local guides say that when flooding occurs that it can be bypassed. Before committing your team to this route check out the weather in the mountains to the north. The scenery in the gorge is breathtaking! After exiting the gorge the trail follows a well maintained 4x4 track to the town of Bou Targh'rar. Although not a lot of height is gained, the route is undulating, with the majority of the route taking you through Berber settlements giving you a feel for life in the region. Today you will encounter and observe a lush oasis growing almonds, dates and figs. There is a good campsite at Bou Targh'rar, where your trek ends.

Overnight camp

Bou Targh'rar



Day 4

Bou Targh'rar to Tabarkhacht



8hrs

APPROX. TOTAL
WALKING TIME



1600m

ALTITUDE



20km

APPROX.
DISTANCE

From Bou Targh'rar the trail drops back to the River Mgoun. When the water is low the trail mainly follows the river, which you'll need to cross over many times. In times of flooding, follow the metalled road for approximately 7.5kms, then cross the river and climb for a short distance reaching a bisse. You will then follow this to the village of Ait Said after about 4 hours. The terrain becomes steep in places with a possibility of landslides in heavy rain. There are two river crossings via log bridges as you approach the lunch site.

After lunch you enter the Valley of Roses, cross the river and follow the west bank of the river, again over undulating terrain and scrambling in places. In places this is very sandy and care should be taken in wet weather. Throughout the afternoon you will be passing through fields of maize and potatoes as you approach the village of Tabarkhacht, which is where your trek ends. There is plenty of opportunity for cultural interaction with the local children here.

Overnight gite

Tabarkhacht



RISK ASSESSMENT

Generic trekking hazards

Read and implement the Trekking standards provided in the Leader Manual.

Mules

Brief Participants on the dangers of mules passing on narrow tracks. Ensure that Participants stand on the uphill side of the track when passing mules.

Ensure that Participants are briefed not to stand too close behind mules to avoid being kicked and to follow muleteer's instructions when near the animals.

River Crossings

Read and implement the Water Margins safety standards provided in the Leader Manual.

Managing groups in hot climates

Temperatures can exceed 25°C between May and September.

Refer to the information for managing groups in hot climates in the Health & Hygiene safety standards provided in the Leader Manual.

Managing groups in cold climates

The coldest months are December to February, with average daytime temperatures being 6°C. Night-time temperatures vary between -1°C to 13°C between October and May.

Refer to the information for managing groups in cold climates in the Health & Hygiene safety standards provided in the Leader Manual.

