



## Sahara Desert Information Pack

### Trip Insurance:

All participants must have suitable travel and emergency medical insurance cover to embark on one of our events. This is a condition of participation mentioned in our T&C's. A policy from any insurer with the correct level of cover will be acceptable. Please send us a copy of the policy wording showing specific cover for your trip, along with the policy number for our records.

If you do not have suitable insurance cover, we recommended clients take a policy from **World Nomads**. Their insurance policies have been designed by travellers for travellers, with coverage for more than 150 activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more. Please use the World Nomads link at Step 3 of the Sign Up page on our website to be taken to your personal policy quote. Make sure you select the Explorer Plan for your trip.

Please email us a copy of your policy certificate for our records.

### Flights:

You are responsible for booking your flights at the correct time. We normally check the flight status and details of our participants to monitor whether they are arriving for the event on time. However, you remain fully responsible for monitoring your flight status. PJS takes no responsibility for any client errors that occur regarding arrival or departure times, dates, or other issues in connection with flight travel.

Please make sure you email us a copy of your flight itinerary as soon as possible, no later than 60 days before departure.

### Visa & Passport:

It is your responsibility to fulfil all passport, visa and other immigration requirements applicable to your itinerary. We can provide general information about the passport and visa requirements for your trip, but this is for guidance only.

Although we require your passport details for our Online Registration, your specific passport requirements are your responsibility. Please check your passport is valid for your dates of travel.

Passports of all travelers must have a spare page for immigration entry stamps and six months of validity after your entry into Morocco. Regardless of where you arrive in Morocco, check that your passport is stamped on arrival because this date entry and unique number will be referenced during your stay by accommodations and immigration officials.

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Travelers from around 70 countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the European Union and the United Kingdom, can travel to Morocco as tourists without a visa. The maximum stay is 90 days, which starts on the date of your entry stamp, not three calendar months.

It is your responsibility to check your personal visa requirements and make the appropriate applications.

#### **Vaccinations:**

Participants should all have up to date vaccinations for Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid. It is optional to have vaccinations for TB, Meningococcal Meningitis, Hepatitis B, Rabies, Cholera.

#### **Malaria Medication:**

The risk of malaria is low in Morocco (including Western Sahara), especially in areas frequented by tourists. Medications to prevent malaria are generally not recommended for travelers, but you should take care to avoid insect bites and see your doctor if you develop a flu-like illness after your trip.

#### **Regular Medication:**

Our team are not medical experts. We encourage you to visit your family doctor to discuss your medication requirements.

- Carry medicines (including those bought over the counter) in their correctly labelled original packaging, as issued by the pharmacist
- These should be carried in your hand luggage when travelling on flights
- Consider packing a spare supply of medication in the hold luggage in case of loss of hand luggage
- A letter from the prescriber detailing the medicines with the generic names for the medications can be helpful for border control checks, and in case medicines have to be replaced or medical help is required
- Carry a note from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery for controlled substances and injection medications
- When taking out an appropriate level of travel health insurance including repatriation, specify cover for any pre-existing illnesses



## Pre-Existing Medical Conditions

Please assess for yourself whether you are fit and able to take on this challenge. Please review this detailed Information Pack, our website and itinerary to get a better idea of what is involved. Please speak to your doctor or specialist if you have any concerns about taking part. If you suffer from a severe allergy, you are required to contact us to discuss any requirements. If you think that there are things we can do to make the adventure more accessible/comfortable for you, it is your responsibility to let us know, and we will then let you know if we can accommodate your request.

Whilst we will do our best to put in place appropriate measures, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

## Medical Support

First Aid qualified staff will be provided with the medical details that you give on your booking form but please note that they are on the trip to support with medical matters related to the trip environment and terrain itself, i.e. heat/cold, high altitude and so on. They will deal with any incidents and accidents (cuts, sprains, breaks and so on). They are not intended to continue any ongoing specialist medical care that you receive for pre-existing medical conditions and should not be assumed to have any professional experience of your specific medical condition.

If you have any specific needs around pre-existing medical conditions, you should discuss with your family doctor or specialist in advance and can discuss any advice given by them with the trip leader.

## Kit List:

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, sun protection and well-worn in boots will be indispensable, particularly coupled with some really good quality walking socks and desert gaiters. The benefits of a comfortable daypack cannot be underestimated, so make sure that you get one fitted in-store and train with this. Other essentials are high quality windproof jackets, technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts, and a warm jacket for the evenings in camp at night. Everything listed on the Kit List is essential.

Please see a full copy of the Kit List at the end of this Information Pack.

## Luggage:

Only soft sided duffle bags, holdalls and rucksack are allowed on the trek. Hard suitcases or soft bags with wheels will not be accepted. The maximum weight for your Kit Bag on the trek is 15kgs. If your bag is too heavy, we will advise what items should be left behind.



Please bring a bag to store any items you don't need to take to the desert such as clean clothes for travel etc. This bag will be stored securely the day we leave until we arrive back after the trek. Valuables can be stored securely. However please try to limit the valuable items you bring. Please note that PJS do not accept responsibility for any stored items.

### **What to Wear for Your Outbound Flights:**

If your checked in luggage gets lost/delayed, it could take a couple of days to catch you up. You won't be able to start your trek without your boots and essential clothes, so wearing or carrying them for the flight is advisable.

- Walking boots
- Walking socks
- Trekking trousers/pants
- Base layer top

### **Accommodation:**

In the desert, you will be sleeping in shared tents. At the very beginning and the end of the trek, you will be staying in a local Bedouin guest house in Mhamid, in shared private rooms, where you will be able to relax and recover around Bedouin campfires and drink tea.

### **Toilets**

There will be a toilet tent set up at camp and water supplied for. Please keep in mind that water is life in the desert & should therefore be preserved.

### **Climate**

After chilly nights, the early mornings will immediately warm up as soon as the sun rises and the days will be warm and hot depending on the season. There can be a difference of 20°C in the desert between day and night, with highs of approximately 25-35°C and lows of 2-7°C.

### **Terrain**

The terrain is incredibly varied, with some days being hard, rocky and flat, with others taking on rolling sand dunes, which can be very hot and very hard going.

### **Food & Drink**

Whilst our team in Morocco will do their best to meet any special requests, gluten free food is quite limited. If you have these requirements, please consider bringing a supply of gluten free bread, oats, and pasta that can be used for daily meals as well as gluten free snack bars during the day.

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### **Electric Power:**

There are no electric charging points whilst in the desert. Using solar chargers and battery packs are recommended.

Assuming you will be using your mobile phones to take photos, if you turn on Airplane Mode and turn off Bluetooth, your battery should last a couple of days from one full charge. Please note that batteries will discharge quicker in the cold, so should be stored overnight inside a bag, sock or jacket.

A 20,000mah battery pack should be capable of charging your phone plenty of times.

### **Communication:**

Wi-Fi is available at the hotel/Riad in Marrakesh, however there will be little to no phone reception in the desert, you should assume that there won't be connection. Even known areas of connection are subject to weather and cloud cover.

Sometimes a PJS Leader will carry a Satellite Phone for emergency use. It is only switched on when it needs to be used so cannot be used for incoming calls.

However, clients can use it to make outgoing international calls whenever they would like, at a cost of \$5 per minute.

### **Emergency Contact:**

In a serious emergency, if you are out of contact, a family member or friend can complete the form on the link below and we will begin the process of reaching you.

The link is also available at the bottom of each of our website pages.

<https://www.pjs-adventures.com/emergency-contact-form>

### **PJS Team Leader**

There will be an English-speaking PJS Team Leader, or local Head Guide who will be responsible for the logistics and co-ordination of your challenge. There will also be numerous local support guides and staff to assist them. The challenge leader will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and safety of the group. The itinerary is there as a guide and may change for a variety of reasons – unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group, and so on. While we will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary, we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that may occur. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say.

### **Training**

A good level of fitness is required. Anyone who leads a fairly active and moderately healthy lifestyle should be able to complete the challenge, as long as they train regularly over a period of 2 - 3 months leading up to it. Don't forget that the temperature and climate will be different, and that you will be exercising constantly for a number of days.

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### **Local Staff Tips:**

Tipping is discretionary. However, we will advise you of the recommended tip amount per client within two weeks of your departure. Tips should be given in cash in either Euros, US Dollars or Moroccan Dirham. You should bring this cash to the mountain. It will be collected from everyone by the PJS Team Leader, and then distributed to the crew before we leave them.

### **Personal safety in and around Marrakech**

Marrakech is vibrant city with a busy tourist scene. This in turn gives a sense of security and safety, and mostly it is but common sense needs to be applied. Here are some considerations for you to avoid unnecessary problems.

- When walking about dress conservatively
- Keep small amounts of spending money in your pockets and have a money belt worn out of sight for the remainder of your cash
- Steer clear of isolated areas and if using a local guide either organise this through the hotel or with our assistance
- Local taxi drivers are unlikely to speak English or be able to read local names written in a Western script. Ask the hotel to provide a written address written in Arabic so that you can always find your way back. Include in this the telephone number for the hotel
- Leave the hotel with a city map/guide in your pocket
- Local police at any time may ask you for proof of identification: carry your passport with you at all times
- Local traffic in the city, in places can be chaotic. Be vigilant and especially careful around the city centre where all sorts of vehicles will come at you from all directions when crossing the road
- The hotel/Riad we stay at is modern and generally well looked after and comfortable. However different cultures have different ideas of health and safety. To this end check that electrical sockets look safe and serviceable. Report any concerns such as loose wiring, exposed wires or similar to the hotel/Riad staff



#### Other Helpful Info:

- Please check off all your kit against the Kit List before packing
- Pack clothes into dry sacks (or other waterproof bags) inside your kit bag in order to help protect against wet, damp and moisture and to make it easier to find what you're looking for in your tent
- Don't forget to bring earplugs as the camp can sometimes be noisy when you want to sleep
- Drinking water alone will not hydrate you enough, make sure you have some electrolyte tablet to use in your water, such as GU, NUUN, ZERO, SIS. The sodium and minerals contained in these electrolytes will help keep you hydrated when you drink
- Bring a variety of snacks. Trail mix, trail bars, chocolate & hard candy. A mixture of sweet and savoury is good.

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## KIT LIST

### RUCKSACKS AND BAGS

- Day Pack 30lt – 40lt
- Duffle bag 70lt – 90lt
- Hotel/Lodge bag
- Dry Sacks

### SLEEPING

- 3 or 4 season sleeping bag
- Sleeping bag liner (optional)

### FOOTWEAR

- Walking boots with ankle protection (or suitable Desert shoes)
- Hiking socks
- Comfortable shoe or sandals (for evenings around camp)
- Desert/Sand gaiters

### EQUIPMENT

- LED Head Torch (plus spare batteries)
- Water Bladder
- 1lt Water Bottles (Nalgene)
- Sunglasses
- Daily Snacks (tracker bars, dried fruit, chocolate, nuts)
- Walking poles (optional)

### CLOTHING

- Windproof Jacket
- Windproof Pants/Trousers
- Warm Jacket
- Lightweight midlayer tops
- Wicking short sleeve t-shirts
- Wicking long sleeve t-shirts
- Trekking Pants / Trousers (not jeans)

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- Shorts (optional)
- Underwear (light and wicking)
- Neck Buff
- Sun Hat
- Warm Hat
- Casual clothes and personal items for last day at the hotel and journey home

## TOILETRIES

- Toothbrush & Toothpaste
- Antibacterial Liquid Soap
- Baby wipes
- Antibacterial Wipes
- Lip Sun Protection Stick
- Travel towel (Microfiber towel that is space saving and fast drying)
- Deodorant
- Insect repellent containing DEET
- Malaria tablets (under advice from your doctor)
- Aftersun/Moisturiser cream
- Sun Cream/ Protection (min SPF30)

## PERSONAL ITEMS

- Camera
- Contact lenses (plus spare glasses)
- Ear Plugs
- Small First Aid Kit
- Pain killers
- Band Aids
- Compeed blister pads
- Antiseptic wipes
- Diarrhoea tablets
- Electrolyte Tablets
- Your own medication
- Knee support (if you normally need and use)



## DOCUMENTS

- Passport (Make sure you have at least 6 months left on your passport expiry date)
- Photocopy of passport (Keep a copy at home and a copy in your travel bag for emergencies)
- Travel insurance (Suitable insurance available from World Nomads, via the PJS Challenges website)
- Visa (please check in-country requirements)
- Flight Tickets
- Cash (US Dollars or Euro)
- Credit card

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