

# THE RIF COMMUNITY FOUNDATION 2011

## *The Atlas & Desert 100 km Challenge*



*'Thank you for your interest in RIFCOM and its movement to empower and change the lives of those living in poverty. We welcome you to join our 2011 Challenge Event that aims to raise funds for our on-going projects in the Rif!'*

*- The Rif Community Foundation*

### ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

As promised, we have designed a fundraising challenge in Morocco's breathtaking Atlas Mountain and Sahara Desert terrains – a win / win for both RifCom and of course, Morocco itself. Not only are funds raised for RifCom, but Morocco again benefits from the expedition in numerous ways!

The challenge is 100 km of trekking through the alpine terrains of the High Atlas Mountains – North Africa's tallest ranges, eventually finishing in the Sahara Desert itself. In 4 days we cover the most extraordinary landscapes – passing ancient Berber civilizations; high alpine meadows; lush forests and desert parched landscapes. The trek begins near the plains of Marrakech and finishes at the gateway to the Sahara itself, *Ait Benhadou*, of Lawrence of Arabia fame.

### HOW IT WORKS

*The adventure is divided into two parts:* The first is the fundraising component, a **100km Trekking Challenge**, where over 4 hard days we trek through extraordinary landscapes of the High Atlas and after one short vehicle transfer, make our final trek to the gateway of the Sahara itself – where our expedition ends. A once in a lifetime experience trekking in world class adventure terrain, led by an experienced team of Berber mountain guides and supported by mules.

The second part is an **optional extension** which invites you to join a life enhancing journey visiting the desert landscapes in comfort – leading to the famous *Erg Chebbi* dunes where we'll travel on camel back and spend a night under the stars in a Bedouin camp. Consider this a personal reward for your efforts!



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### WHAT TO EXPECT



Trekking anywhere in the region of the Atlas and Sahara requires, among other things, stamina, tolerance, focus and adjustment to the rigours of being on stony mountain trails for hours on end. Elevations of over 2000m on foot are to be expected, reaching a maximum height of 2500m, and in November we could encounter snow, or at least serious alpine weather systems.

Accommodation for 3 nights will be tent camps with sleeping bags. Long trekking days are to be expected and although we have plenty of support, comfort levels are minimal due to terrain. Expect towering rock peaks; sweeping valleys with raging river systems and flat roofed, mud washed Berber houses authenticating our route.

Forests of ancient conifers shelter unearthly rock formations and mountain ridges offer unprecedented views north to Marrakech's vast plains or south into the Sahara's empty silence. We will be at both high and low altitudes on this challenge – *it is mountainous*. A team of local guides, pack mules, drivers and cooks support the expedition. Days will be long, enduring yet extremely rewarding intrinsically.



The fourth and final day is completed in the Sahara desert itself whereby the group is rewarded with hotel accommodation and a celebratory 'Gala' style dinner.

*Adventurebug Ltd.* A licensed Adventure company and logistics specialist for RifCom events and many other international charity challenges will lead the expedition – incorporating their professionally high level of safety analysis and hazard prevention and ensuring a smooth running of all aspects of the challenge.



***An opportunity to 'give back' to Morocco's impoverished rural communities is essentially the mission at hand. You will play a massive role in more ways than perceived.***

***JOIN US ON THIS ONCE IN A LIFETIME CHALLENGE AND ADVENTURE!***

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### Day 1 – Friday, 11 November 2011

Group departure from Gibraltar Frontier for Tarifa ferry to Tangier. Departure time TBA (late afternoon). Arrival to Tangier and board the MARRAKECH EXPRESS night train. This historic journey takes us through the heart of Morocco in our basic but comfortable sleeper car (4 per cabin). No better way to set off on a Moroccan Adventure than by train! Note – please bring a pack dinner for the journey. Timings will be tight so no time to sit for a meal.

- Note – train travel subject to final confirmation – alternatives include long distance coach (overnight), or flights.

### Day 2 – Saturday, 12 November 2011



Early arrival to Marrakech / breakfast followed by a direct transfer (1 hr 30 min approx) by coach to the Atlas foothills and the *Ourika* Valley to *Imlil* village - the heart of Atlas trekking - under the auspices of *Toubkal*, North Africa's highest summit. We begin our expedition on foot here, meeting our team of guides & mules and immediately ascending to the village of *Ait Igrane* for lunch. Afterwards, we carry on climbing to reach the pastures of *Aoudal-n-Ikrkae* where we'll set up camp. Overnight in tent camp / expect cool night temperatures / alpine

terrain. Breakfast, lunch and dinner provided.

**Trekking time** = 5 hours

**Distance** = 19 km

**Elevation gain** = 750 m

**Transfers Time** (micro bus) = 1.5 hours (before trek)

### Day 3 – Sunday, 13 November 2011

Early departure from camp continuing our journey in the heart of the Atlas high range towards *Yagour*, crossing huge pastures frequented by transhumant nomads. Here we discover rock carvings and engravings dating back 5000 years BC. Lunch at the village of *Warzazate*, followed by a descent towards the valley of *Zat* through a forest of oak and juniper. Bivouac (tent camp) near the village of *Azghour*.

**Trekking time** = 8 hours

**Distance** = 26 km

**Elevation gain** = 250 m / 1100 m descent later in day



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### Day 4 – Monday, 14 November 2011

A long day today, setting off at day break - direction *Tizi-n-Tichka* (the infamous high pass of the Atlas). Our path follows the bed of the Zat River and climbs to the plateau of *Afra* through beautiful landscapes and passing many remote Berber villages. Lunch on the pastures of *Afra*. Carrying on, we arrive to a vehicle transfer – driving us over the Tichka Pass (2260m), towards *Telouet*, the highest Kasbah fortress in Morocco, before descending by transport, the *Ounila Valley*: one of the most fascinating tracks of the High Atlas, until our tent camp before tomorrow's final trek taking us out of the Atlas and into the Sahara Desert itself.

**Trekking time** = 6 hours

**Distance** = 24 km

**Elevation gain** = 700 m

**Transfers Time** (micro bus) = 2 hours (after trek)



### Day 5 – Tuesday, 15 November 2011



Today, our final day is also the longest - in entirely different terrain as we enter the transition zone between the Atlas range and the Sahara desert. Trekking through the *Ounila Valley* is reminiscent of the canyons and oasis landscapes found in desert terrains worldwide, think *Star Wars*! Villages built of red sandstone cling to steep river banks hundreds of feet above the palm plantations in the oasis valley below – a truly mesmerizing experience. Our final destination, the village of *Ait Benhadou*, a World Heritage Site (UNESCO), famous for countless blockbusters such as *Lawrence of Arabia*, *the Gladiator*, *the Mummy*, *Indiana Jones* and more is a welcoming place for one's weary condition after 4 days and 100 km of intensive trekking. Tonight's accommodation in a charming hotel is a far cry from our tent camps. With a pool; roof terraces overlooking the Sahara and even a cushioned seat to enjoy the celebratory meal, you'll feel most rewarded for your efforts!

**Trekking time** = 8 hours

**Distance** = 30 km

**Elevation** = 1000 m (descent / gradual)

#### NOTES:

- \* Distances are approximates – height loss/gain and elevation play a major factor
- \* Routes subject to weather patterns
- \* Basic training / conditioning is necessary to complete this challenge

For those who choose to go home at this point, you will be transported back to Marrakech for an afternoon's experience of that great city, then the overnight sleeper train to Tangier and ferry home. For others, another exciting adventure awaits.....

# THE RIF COMMUNITY FOUNDATION 2011 Optional Desert Extension Program



## PART II – OPTIONAL EXTENSION PROGRAM (*Post Challenge*)

### *Sahara Desert Tour Experience*



*Having completed the 'challenge' component of the expedition on behalf of RifCom, we invite you to participate on our onward journey to explore Morocco's Saharan landscapes.*

*This tour program, designed separately from the Trekking Challenge, is essentially a private tour for the group. The cost is in **addition** to your fundraising amount for RifCom and in no manner will your sponsors be, or perceive to be covering this cost. It is a tour of great value for the discerned traveler – we encourage you to reward yourself for*

*your hard work and join this insightful journey in one of Africa's most unique corners!*

### **Day 6 – Wednesday, 16 November 2011**

This morning after breakfast we set off in a comfortable micro bus for our circular 4 day journey through the Saharan landscapes of both the *Hamada* (stone desert) and *Erg* (dune desert). Our first visits include the Oasis, *Skoura Palmerie*, where an ancient Kasbah once held treasures of the silk route in desert oasis terrain, followed by a visit to the spectacular Todra Gorge where steep walls hundreds of feet high tower above. A relaxing and highly scenic tour day with stunning views of this mystical land. Cozy accommodation in a kasbah heritage hotel with optional 'Hammam' bathhouse experience this evening. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.



### **Day 7 – Thursday, 17 November 2011**

Day 2 of our Saharan exploration as we make our way through the far reaches of Morocco's eastern perimeter to within 20km of Algeria's border where we encounter the magnificent Erg Chebbi dune landscape. Morocco's most famous Saharan dune is just breathtaking and transforming to the soul. On foot or camel back you have the option to travel into the remote dunes until our Bedouin style camp hidden in the dunes. An evening sunset climb to one of the higher dunes is customary followed by dinner and perhaps a campfire experience and Berber songs and storytelling can be arranged. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.

Accommodation in either Bedouin style desert tents or dome tents with sleeping bag. Temperatures normally 12-15c at night.

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## Optional Desert Extension Program



### Day 8 – Friday, 18 November 2011



This morning after breakfast we set off on foot through the dunes to meet our transportation. A long but scenic journey then brings us through southern Anti Atlas desert terrain where we may see nomadic camel herders crossing plains and witness the thriving date palm communities of this remote landscape – a truly fascinating day in cobra land! Our final destination, *Ouarzazate*, is the Moroccan Sahara's largest center and home to one of Hollywood's most versatile studios for film making. We spend one night here in a comfortable hotel and if time permits, we'll make a tour of *Ouarzazate's* main attractions and bazaar. Accommodation, breakfast, lunch and dinner provided.

### Day 9 – Saturday, 19 November 2011

Today we depart Ouarzazate early and drive the breathtaking pass of *Tizni-n-Tichka* over the high Atlas to Marrakech (approx 4 hours). Our final day on tour and a chance to visit Marrakech and its famous souk (market place) with snake charmers, fortune tellers, acrobats and more. Time permitting we can also visit Koutoubia Mosque and see 'new' Marrakech before catching the night train to Tangier. Breakfast and lunch included only / you are free to explore the many fine eateries of Marrakech and the *Djemaa El Fna* square before meeting up for our train transfer.



### Day 10 – Sunday, 20 November 2011

Morning arrival to Tangier with immediate transfer to Tangier ferry port. After crossing, private group coach transfer direct to the Gibraltar Frontier where we say goodbye to our fellow adventure travelers. Estimate arrival time mid afternoon. No meals included on this day.



#### NOTES:

- *Tour includes private group micro bus transfers throughout; 2 nights hotel accommodation (Heritage Hotels / twin share); all meals as per itinerary; local guide; 1 night desert camp (Berber tents); camel hire for dunes exploration.*
- *Local guide / driver tip not included or beverages at meals.*
- *Tour renders an additional fee to the fundraising challenge event.*
- *Additional shuttles or changes to itinerary are not included.*

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## Trek and Optional Desert Extension



### Pricing and Fundraising

The minimum financial commitment YOU need to make to take part in the Atlas and Desert 100km Challenge is **£1,200**, being £500\* costs and £700\* donations (*although as this is a charity fundraising event you are of course encouraged to raise in excess of that amount*).

That minimum sum of £1,200 is payable in whole or in parts to RifCom as soon as you can and in any event before the following dates:

- i. £150 upon registration
- ii. £450 on or before 17th June 2011
- iii. £600 on or before 12th October 2011

The cost of participating in the Optional Desert Extension Program is **£300** (*it is a condition of registration that you pay that amount from your own pocket and do not fund-raise for it*). This is payable by you in a maximum two instalments; the first £150 due upon registration (*deferment possible for 1 month or until 22nd April at the latest*) and the second £150 due by 17th June.

#### **PART I: The 100 km Atlas to Desert RifCom Challenge!**

5 Nights / 6 day program (Fri to Tue)  
£500 per person (+£700 fundraising)

##### **WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE FEE?**

- Return transfers to / from Gibraltar Frontier via coach, ferry, train or bus and all local shuttles.
- 3 nights tent accommodation in the High Atlas and all meals provided by team of cooks – all equipment inc.
- Final night desert hotel accommodation and gala dinner celebration.
- Professional guiding services with mule support team throughout.
- 1 doctor or emergency support staff
- Daily mineral water bottle allowance (3 Liters / day / pax) and provisions to purchase more throughout – 4 days provision.
- Event Management services including emergency evacuation plan / risk assessment.
- Third party Public Liability Insurance (\*accident / medical / personal insurance not included).

#### **PART II: The Optional Sahara Tour Add-On!**

3 Nights / 4 day program (Wed-Sat)  
£300 per person

##### **WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE FEE?**

- All transfers in private, air conditioned micro bus(s) for duration of Desert Tour.
- 2 nights comfortable Heritage Hotels / twin & possible triple share.
- 1 night Bedouin style Berber Camp in Erg Chebbi dunes.
- All meals as per itinerary.
- Entrance fees and site visits where applicable.
- Local guiding services, driver and support team.
- Camel hire for desert dune access
- Tour Management services including emergency evacuation plan / risk assessment.
- Third party Public Liability Insurance (\*accident / medical / personal insurance not included).

*Tipping of local guides, drivers, cooks, etc. and beverages for both programs additional...*

\* The exact split between cost and donation will depend on exchange rates ruling at the time RifCom pays local Moroccan providers for trip costs. The total minimum commitment for Event Participants will remain at £1,200.