

ENCOUNTER OVERLAND

Expedition to High Atlas and Sahara

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AIM

THE AIM of this expedition is to travel to some remote and lesser known regions of North West Africa, specifically the High Atlas and the Jebel Sarhro of Morocco and penetrate the Algerian Sahara to the oases of El Oued, Touggourt and Guerara.

INTRODUCTION

ENCOUNTER OVERLAND is an organisation that specializes in long range expeditions. These are largely over the routes that lead into the Middle East and India, Kashmir and Nepal. More recently there have been several expeditions to Morocco and Algeria, and two crossings of the Sahara to Nigeria.

THE ORGANISERS, apart from experience gained with Encounter Overland since 1963 have a wide scope of experience to draw from as ex-infantry officer, instructor at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, Himalayan trekker and climber, traveller in Viet Nam, China and Mongolia, traveller in Central Africa, and as engineers and mechanics.

COST. In all our expeditions we find one simple principle works. This is that the cost takes into account all these expenses of the expedition; transport and ferry fares, food, accommodation, personal insurance and our responsibility in the event of a serious problem of getting people home without extra cost. There are no hidden extras, and this leaves a Briton with his £50 allowance intact, to be spent on an occasional local meal, drinks etc. and of course gifts and souvenirs.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT CAMPING, VEHICLES AND FOOD

CAMPING along almost all the route is pleasant. The timing and route taken avoid almost all winter conditions in Europe and the intolerably long hot Saharan summer. In Europe and Morocco organised camping sites are often used and in outlying areas police outposts are sometimes available. Tents, camp-beds, etc., are all supplied, you need only your own sleeping bag.

OUR VEHICLES are 1½-ton four-wheel-drive semi-forward-control trucks built to military specification precisely for this kind of work. As a result of our preference for diesel over petrol they are now powered by 4 litre British Leyland diesel engines, and otherwise extensively modified and especially equipped to meet our very exacting requirements. They are rugged and dependable yet fast and spacious. Those used for these Sahara expeditions are further equipped with long range fuel tanks and containers, special water containers and other sophisticated equipment, including shovels!

Our policy whenever possible is to have two vehicles travelling together thus giving mutual support.

They are designed to seat up to twelve people travelling in comfort with their belongings, and the equipment, food, water etc. Cooking can be done as easily inside as outside, there is room to stand up and prepare food on gas stoves and for the group to sit down at a table and enjoy it.

GOOD FOOD is an essential part of any good trip; most of our provisions will be taken with us supplemented whenever possible with fresh food bought en route.

THE GROUP

MEN and WOMEN who are interested in a journey like this and realise what is involved are able to contribute enormously to its success. We don't look for a particular 'type', but for people who, with a spirit of enquiry and goodwill, can help in their different ways to make the expedition enjoyable.

THE EXPEDITION

THIS EXPEDITION is to be a great adventure; properly informed, prepared and equipped, and it will be an exciting and often hilarious experience. Adventure is combined with good organisation and what is undertaken is sensible and safe.

It is an adventure only for a particular type of traveller; one in whom stirs fascination as much for brooding mountains as bustling bazaars, for a journey beyond the edges of isolation and for exquisite, almost microscopic, beauty in an almost infinite waste.

The Sahara is considered the most absolute desert on earth. It is a region of extreme temperatures and dry winds. Yet in this wilderness are to be found places and objects of nature and antiquity, haunting and beautiful and—almost out of reach.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Cost: The inclusive cost of the expedition per member is £118.

Time and Space. The expedition will take 40 days. It will cover approximately 5,000 miles.

Booking: A deposit of £18 should be sent with the Booking Form. This assures you your place. You will receive an official receipt. The balance is due ten days before departure. Cheques should be made payable to Encounter Overland.

Reference: For your reference our bankers are Lloyds Bank Ltd., Cox's & King's Branch, 6 Pall Mall, London, S.W.1. Other references will be supplied on request.

Insurance: Included in the cost of the expedition is Travel Insurance for each individual member of £2,000 Personal Accident, £200 Medical Expenses and £100 Personal Effects.* The Insurance Form will be sent to you on receipt of your deposit and should be filled in and returned to us. You will receive your policy before departure. If you wish to make your own insurance arrangements there is a £5 reduction of the cost. But clients must have effective insurance cover.

Passports: Passports must be valid for the length of the trip and have sufficient pages for border stamps. Citizens of the U.K. do not require any visas.

Medical Formalities: You must be vaccinated against smallpox and hold an International Vaccination Certificate.

MEETINGS

Throughout the year there are meetings at The Royal Overseas League in London. Some are general for people to meet us and discuss plans further, others are for those going on a particular trip. Contact us to find out when they are. Though these meetings are useful and enjoyable, they are not essential and of course people join expeditions who have not been able to meet us beforehand.

Alternatively come and see us at Wren Park. People are always welcome here at our workshops and office, though prior notice is preferred.

OTHER DETAILS

A guide to clothing and personal equipment, final departure arrangements, mailing addresses, etc. will be provided at meetings or by post.

***If you have any queries or want further information please contact us.**

ITINERARY

London to the Straits of Gibraltar — 6 days. 1,600 miles

From Calais the route will take us through Rouen, Chartres, Tours and Angouleme to Bordeaux. We will cross the flat region of Landes to Biarritz and St. Jean de Luz a fishing town just four miles from the Spanish Border.

In Spain we go through San Sebastian and Tolosa and the old cathedral town of Burgos which is well worth a visit. After crossing the Puerto de Somosierra we arrive in Madrid. We plan a detour from Madrid to visit Toledo and then cross a desolate plateau and the Sierra Morena through Jaen to Granada. Time is well spent at the Alhambra, famous old Moorish palace and drinking the wine, before travelling on over a part of the Sierra Nevada to the coast.

We follow the Costa del Sol from Motril through Nerja, with its vast underground caves and on to Malaga and Marbella to Algeciras. Across the bay is the Rock of Gibraltar and discernible on the southern horizon is the coast of Africa.

Morocco and the High Atlas — 16 days. 1,400 miles.

From Ceuta (Sebta) where we land we drive along the coast to Tetouan and inland over the Rif Mountains to Chechaouen and on to Meknes, Rabat, Fez, and Marrakech the four Imperial cities of Morocco also visiting Volubilis and Moulay Idriss, ruins of a Roman past.

We reach Marrakech through the forests on the northern slopes of the Atlas and from its teeming streets and bazaars we will go south in to the Massif of the High Atlas across the Tizi-n-Tichka (pass) at 8,000 ft. and descend to Quarzazate. We will then follow the Dadess Valley with the mass of the High Atlas to the north and the Djebel Sarhro to the south.

This is the land of the Berbers and it is here in the regions around Tinerhir, Ksar-Es-Souk and Erfoud that there will be time to linger in the shadow of the mountains and in the Oases that straddle the streams as they drain into the wastes of the Sahara. Erfoud is the terminus of the trans-desert caravans and a remote trading place. A reconnaissance in the region will encounter some of the nomadic people and take us to the ruins of Sijilmasa.

We will return to the cities through the Gorges du Ziz, Midelt and the Col du Zad and travel eastwards through Taza and Oujda to the Algerian frontier.

Algeria and the Sahara — 14 days. 1,500 miles.

We are now back in a Mediterranean climate and Tlemen is likened to old Spanish towns with its Andalusian influence and even older Roman remains. Nevertheless there is a delightful Arab Quarter full of

life and colour. We meet the coast at Oran and follow the sea for nearly three hundred miles to Algiers before going among the mountains again to Constantine, a remarkable and very old city astride a gorge.

From Constantine we go across L'Aures, a powerful massif from which rise the highest peaks in Algeria. The first actions of the revolution against the French began here in 1954. We will visit Timgad one of the best preserved yet ignored Roman cities that is said to compare with Pompeii or Herculaneum. We will come out of the mountains by the Canyon de l'Oued el Ablod, a fertile rift in an otherwise desolate landscape that brings us down to four hundred feet below sea level into the Great Sahara Depression.

We shall now journey to several of the oases; El Qued and Touggourt, and to Dziuoua and Guerara using compass and the details as shown on the most up to date maps. The tracks are used by caravans and the occasional vehicle. At Dziuoua is a legionary fort. This section of the journey will take four to five days.

The expedition will then return to Algiers through the oases of Laghouat and Djelfa climbing the parallel ranges of the Eastern Atlas to the Col des Caravanes and descending to the coastal plain.

From Algiers the expedition will return to Europe and so back to England.