



**Had days like these?!**

**Not a normal photo to sell a trip?**

**Well just to show you that it's not *always* "wall-to-wall" sunshine in the Moroccan High Atlas Mountains!**

**That's another thing that makes it a superb location for our 2009 Expedition & Winter Mountain Training course.**

**March 15 – 22, 2009**

Our Winter 2009 Expedition Training programme consists of one **scheduled course** and any number of **private courses for small groups** (min 3 pers) that want to choose their own dates instead.



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**Just *some* other aspects that make it a great expedition training location are:-**

- ✓ The 4000m peaks
- ✓ Less than 4 hours flight time from UK / Ireland / Europe
- ✓ *Considerably* more sunshine than e.g. Scotland!
- ✓ Trips here *are* mini expeditions – so we're not just pretending!
- ✓ Completely different culture & way of life in the mountains
- ✓ No easily accessible mountain rescue system
- ✓ As remote as you can possibly want to be in a training course
- ✓ Great winter & snow conditions
- ✓ Often outside the reach of GSM mobile cover
- ✓ **Us - NomadicMorocco.Com !**

**Interested? - read on...**

*Oh and if you can answer "yes" to the question in the top photo, you're already half prepared because the photo below is what the Moroccan High Atlas are normally like in the winter!*



**Well the first page was a bit tongue-in-cheek so let's get a bit more formal:-**

Whether you're preparing to climb Aconcagua or Mera Peak, or go somewhere a bit less crowded, this Expedition & Winter Mountain Training Course in March 2009 is specially designed to prepare you in as many possible ways for your big trip.

### **COURSE CONTENT**

**This is just some of what our course content includes:-**

- ✓ Winter mountain experience – use of snowshoes, crampons & ice-axe
- ✓ Ropework - emergency situations and moving together
- ✓ Snowholing, winter camping and self-sufficient backpacking
- ✓ Use of multi-fuel stoves and menu planning
- ✓ Mountain medicine, casualty care and rescue in remote situations
- ✓ Use of avalanche transceivers
- ✓ Route finding in map free areas
- ✓ Use of GPS and Altimeters
- ✓ Use of avalanche transceivers
- ✓ Guidelines for safe travel in back-country areas on snowshoes
- ✓ Culture differences and communications
- ✓ Staying healthy in a developing country
- ✓ Fitness and stamina training

Alongside this **comprehensive skills training content**, the course operates in a real mountain environment and presents participants with a **serious mountain objective**. We believe that these two elements (skills training and a mountain to climb) will ensure you are more ready for your future expedition(s) by being:-

- **Better prepared from a mountaineering point of view**
- **Physically and mentally stronger**
- **More confident having gained more experience from this course**

*On top of all of this, we want you to enjoy yourself, have a holiday in a great country with great people and great mountains!*

Many of our previous clients have combined a successful winter trip with a surfing break out on the Atlantic rollers of the western seaboard, or taken a trip to the dunes of the Sahara desert. Others simply get lost in the souks of Marrakech!  
*Whatever grabs you – you're sure to find it in this fascinating country.*

### **LOCATION**

**Irhil Mgoun at 4068m** is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest peak in the Moroccan High Atlas, and the highest outside of the Toubkal region.

It is however a much more remote and consequently serious undertaking in the winter - the differences between a Toubkal and Mgoun winter ascent cannot be overstated!

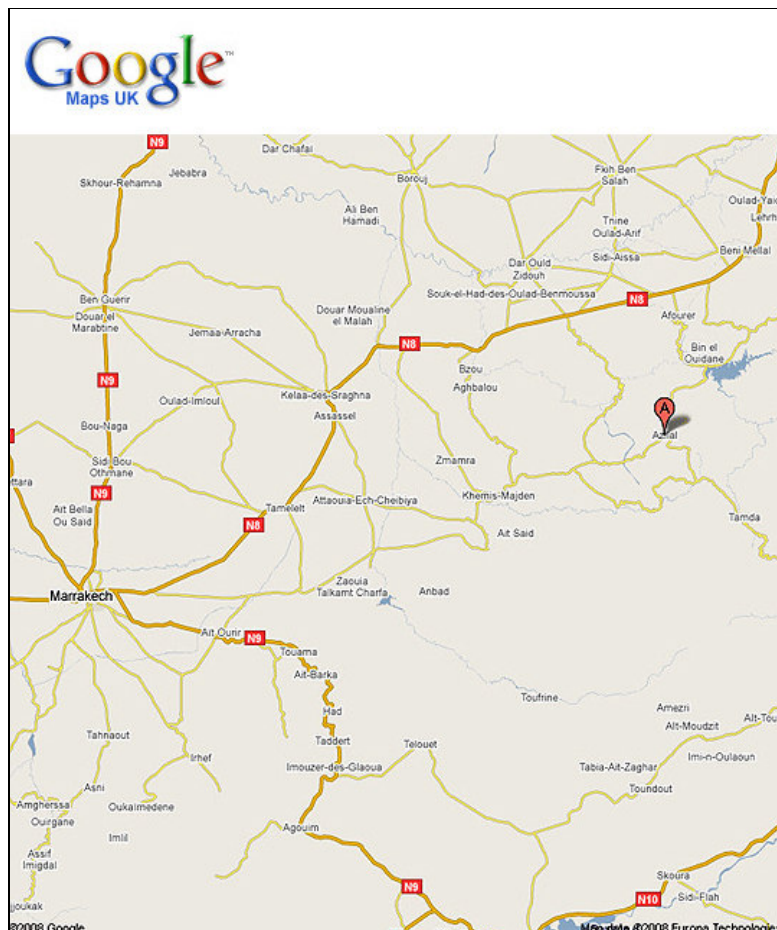
*We are the only English speaking mountaineering company offering trips and courses in the Mgoun region in winter.  
What's more we're actually based in Morocco!*

This course programme is borne out of our many years experience in running winter trips in the Mgoun / Ait Bougammez valley region and dealing with all the complexities it involves!

Our Winter 2008/09 Expedition Training programme consists of one **scheduled course** and any number of **private courses for small groups** (min 3 pers) that want to choose their own dates instead.

**Irhil Mgoun** is south of the Ait Bougammez valley which is itself about 2½ hours drive from **Azilal** (A)

Compared to Imlil (Toubkal), which is directly south of Marrakech and less than 1½ hours drive, the Mgoun region feels (and is!) truly expeditionary in winter.



## COURSE OUTLINE

<b>March 15<sup>th</sup></b>	Meet 09.00 in central Marrakech  Transfer by 4x4 to Agouti in the Ait Bougammez valley with lunch en-route in Azilal ( <u>6 hours</u> approx)  Get settled into gite and prepare our gear etc for tomorrow. Evening dinner and retire for the night.
<b>March 16<sup>th</sup></b>	After breakfast, meet our mule team who will be with us for the next couple of days. Trek south-westwards along a piste and then smaller mule trails to the remote Berber village of Rougoult 1893m. Stay overnight in simple village house. <u>5 hours</u>  (Today we will have the luxury of having our bags transported by mule – depending on the exact snowline we will also have this mule support for about half of tomorrows route)
<b>March 17<sup>th</sup></b>	A great days walk beckons! Berber villages; upland summer grazing areas with small stone-built settlements (azibs); high mountain passes (3500m); before getting to our mountain refuge on the remote Tarkeddit plateau at 2900m situated to the NW of Mgoun itself.  Our mules will accompany us as far as possible up to the snowline. At this stage, we will take our packs ourselves, possibly put on our snowshoes and begin the climb up to the Tarkeddit ridge (3500m) where on arrival we will get our first awesome views of the Mgoun massif. We then drop down to the welcoming site of the privately owned mountain refuge on the Tarkeddit plateau at 2900m.  <u>8 hours</u> on a mix of mule trails, open mountain country and high snow covered passes.
<b>March 18<sup>th</sup></b>	Training day looking at use of avalanche transceivers, GPS, altimeters and route finding in areas of poor mapping. Most of today we will be using snowshoes to travel. On return to refuge we will discuss mountain medicine, altitude issues, casualty care and rescue in remote situations Overnight in refuge.
<b>March 19<sup>th</sup></b>	This morning we leave the comforts of the refuge and begin a 2 day mini trip. During these next couple of days we will be looking at the full winter mountain experience - use of snowshoes, crampons & ice-axe; ropework in emergency situations and moving together; snowholing / winter camping and self-sufficient backpacking. In the evening at our bivy / campsite, we will look at the use of multi-fuel stoves and menu planning.
<b>March 20<sup>th</sup></b>	After pre-dawn breakfasts we will leave our snowcaves and start the steady climb to the peak of Mgoun West at just under 4000m. There we gain the ridge for the summit of <b>Irhil Mgoun 4068m</b> , some 4km away to the east and at an average altitude of 4000m.  This is a great ridge walk with far-reaching views to the south and the semi-desert oases. The ridge is an “out and back” route with no easy escape options and which will take around 3-4 hours in itself.  The route may require a combination of crampons and snowshoes depending on the snow conditions and there will be lots of learning in a real situation.  Re-gaining Mgoun West again (after our hopefully successful summit!), we drop back down southwards to the refuge where we celebrate our return, late afternoon!  <u>Expect around a 10 - 11 hour day.</u>
<b>March 21<sup>st</sup></b>	Our last day in the mountains. Today we climb back over the Tarkeddit ridge at around 3400m before descending the steep slopes down to summer grazing pastures and from there a straightforward walk out back to the gite in Agouti. 8 hours approx. Celebratory evening meal and retire for the night.
<b>March 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	Transfer back to Marrakech – expected time of arrival around 12.00. Coffees / mint-teas and goodbyes.

*In addition to all our knowledge, resources, help and attention to detail before the course starts, **once we meet you in Marrakech, our price of € 715 includes:-***

- ✓ full-board accommodation for the 7 nights – i.e. gite in Agouti, Berber village house, mountain refuge & camping / snowhole
- ✓ all food throughout from the time we leave Marrakech until we get back there
- ✓ all transport costs associated with the official trip itinerary
- ✓ porters / mule support at the beginning of the trip
- ✓ professional guiding / instructor services
- ✓ gear usage such as stoves / cookware; avalanche transceivers; snow shovels etc

The additional costs for you once we meet up would be just bottles of water, drinks outside of meals, any showers charged for separately by the accommodation providers and any additional snacks you may wish to purchase.

You obviously have to **get to Marrakech** (Easyjet, Ryanair, Atlas-Blue, Jet4You & BA) and **organise travel / medical insurance** (we check on this when you are booking) **for the trip**. We can **recommend [VentureGuard](#) to cover all your travel insurance needs.**



*What it's all about – mountain summits and blue skies!*

## ABOUT US

NomadicMorocco is a trading name of **Wilderplaces Adventure Tours NI Ltd** (a company registered in Northern Ireland) but our office is based in southern Morocco where we live.

We strive to offer high quality (mountain) adventure trips and give our clients something different from the bigger, international travel companies. Sensitivity to the local environment and Berber culture is of the utmost importance to all of us. Compared to the larger travel companies we have a small committed client base - the result of this is that we know most of our clients on an individual level and so can offer a highly personalised service before, during and after a trip. *We are a small independent provider and have years of combined experience* in leading groups and individuals to some of the most remote and unspoilt areas in this fabulous mountain range.

### Who will be our guides?



Pyrenees, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile and Iceland.

A qualified **IML** & founding director of **Wilderplaces**, he now resides in the sunny climes of southern Morocco with his wife Nathalie and their 3 children.

**Des Clark**, an Irishman who has 20+ years of mountain-top experience in Scottish winters (before he got sense!), the Alps,



**Matt Low** has been in Morocco since 1990 and is the founding director of High Country.

Few people know the country as well as this man. Whether it be kayaking, off-roading in "Old Blue", snow or rock-climbing, Matt is the most proficient all rounder there is!

Currently masterminding a website on Imlil and its surrounds...



### Are you insured?

Absolutely! Wilderplaces Adventure Tours (NI) Ltd (and all their trading names) are insured in the UK with Royal Sun Alliance for professional indemnity, public & employers liability. *In addition* we require all our clients to arrange their own medical / travel / repatriation insurance in advance of the trip. We can **recommend [VentureGuard](#) to cover all your travel insurance** needs.

### How are clients legally protected?

Although we operate in Morocco, the contract between us and our clients is in the name of our registered NI/UK company, Wilderplaces Adventure Tours (NI) Ltd.

Running any internet focused company requires trust on both the clients and company's part. You can totally rely on our honesty. Many of our clients are repeats and / or by word of mouth.

### There are a few other companies I've come across offering expedition / winter training courses. Why book with you?

- We are some of the most knowledgeable, experienced and qualified western guides (living) in Morocco and try harder than almost anyone to make sure you have the best winter mountaineering experience you can have in the Moroccan High Atlas. *Having a company with guides that are based here in-country is so much more beneficial to clients we believe, than travelling with a company that may outsource all your aspirations out to others.*
- We will be totally honest with you.
- We try to run the most imaginative courses / itineraries and definitely do not "follow the crowd"!
- We prefer to run small group trips that definitely don't make as much money as some large groups that we see around with other companies! Small groups to us are safer, more flexible and much more enjoyable. **The ratio we operate on this course is 1:3 with a maximum of 6 clients and 2 guides/instructors**
- We have great local staff (cook, kitchen staff, muleteers and porters) which is vital in a country like Morocco!
- We've experienced all weathers in the High Atlas and have true expedition experience!
- We enjoy what we're doing!

### Trip Ethos

A small private group, personally led by Des Clark IML, NomadicMorocco founding director; whose job it is to ensure that you have a week of quality expedition and winter mountain training in the remote Mgoun region of the Moroccan Central High Atlas, reaching the summit of Irhil Mgoun 4068m (conditions permitting!) It's that simple!



*Whilst in a way we hope we don't get this weather – it is great training !*

## **Misc information**

### **Food on the trip**

Morocco is said to have one of the finest cuisines in the world. So whilst we're with our cook (all nights other than the camping / snowholing ones), you can expect good wholesome food (given the conditions in which he will be cooking for us!). He will ensure that this food is freshly prepared using local ingredients and that there is plenty for everyone. A typical menu would be:

Breakfast: Fresh bread with cheese, jam, margarine, tea, coffee, hot chocolate and hot milk.

Lunch: A light lunch consisting of fresh mixed salad, tinned fish or meat, bread and cheese, followed by fresh local fruit.

Afternoon tea: Tea / coffee / hot chocolate with some dates, figs, nuts and biscuits.

Dinner: The evening meal is always a hot meal and is different every night - traditional Moroccan cuisine of Tajine or couscous with meat and vegetables or the occasional pasta meal. This is followed by fresh fruit and the famous mint tea.!

During our nights in the snowholes we will be eating expedition type food that we all cook ourselves over MSR multi-fuel stoves.

### **Kit List / Clothes / Weather etc**

**On receipt of your reservation, we will send you a web-link so you can access our extensive suggested equipment on-line.**

In essence you will need normal winter walking clothes and equipment including snowshoes, crampons, trekking poles, walking ice-axe, a good quality sleeping bag, bivy bag and down jacket etc.

The weather at this time of the year is generally sunny days and cold nights. However this is the winter and therefore it can snow! Weather in these high mountains can be unpredictable and you should be prepared for this. The snow-line is generally around 2500m meaning that by the time you arrive at the Tarkeddit refuge which is at 2900, you will be in the snow.

### **Environmental / Health**

All our guides are qualified in remote and wilderness first aid and always carry a fully equipped first aid kit for serious medical emergencies. However this is not a general dispensary - please bring your own supplies of plaster, blister prevention pads, paracetamol etc. and any medication you are on. We will be discussing mountain medicine issues during this trip.

You should note that there are no official mountain rescue services in Morocco and that any evacuation in the event of a serious medical emergency to the nearest hospital will be by land as opposed to helicopter.

There are no compulsory vaccinations for Morocco but, as always, you should keep Hep A, Tetanus, Polio, Typhoid and possibly rabies up to date. Consult your GP or a vaccine specialist for professional advice.

### **Altitude issues**

Although the highest point of this trip is the summit of Mgoun - 4068m, the highest point at which we sleep which is often the critical issue, will be a snowhole probably around 3400m. Whilst you may feel some initial effects of this and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day crossing the pass at 3500m, this trip itinerary is designed to maximise acclimatisation and you are unlikely to have any serious AMS issues. Remember it is very important to drink lots and maintain a good hydration level. If you would like to read more on Altitude Mountain Sickness, then please contact us and we will happily send you some light reading material! We will be discussing more about AMS, its symptoms and treatments etc on the course itself.

### **Currency / Visas / Language**

Nationals of Ireland, the U.K, U.S.A, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and most E.U countries do not require visas for entry into Morocco. Your passport is stamped with a 90day entry visa on arrival. Make sure your passport has an expiry date more than 6 months into the future from your arrival date into the country.

The currency in Morocco is the dirham (dh). There are about 11dh to the Euro. It is impossible to get dirham outside of Morocco - therefore take € Euros, £ Sterling or US\$ and exchange on arrival. Alternatively or in addition, there are plenty of ATM's in the airport and Marrakech. Do not depend on using your credit card for purchases - this is a cash society in the main!

Language is Arabic / Berber but French is also understood / spoken widely. Little or no English spoken / understood outside of main tourist areas.

Time difference = GMT all year.

### **Fitness / previous experience**

Climbing Mgoun in winter generally requires using snowshoes and/or wearing crampons and using a walking ice-axe. Remoteness is also an issue in terms of any back-up rescues. The summit day on Mgoun is committing, as there are no escape routes on the ridge from Mgoun West to Mgoun main summit. There is no technical climbing as such on this course - this is winter walking with some scrambling.

**Those with some Scottish or Welsh winter routes under their belt will enjoy this course, as will those who have snowshoed in the Alps and wish to extend their experience beyond Europe.**

In terms of fitness, **you should be used to or fit enough to cope with energetic 8 hour days (sometime more) in the high mountains for the duration of your course** bearing in mind that the weather whilst generally favourable can make life much more difficult at 4000m's if it turns nasty.

### **Maps**

There is one "map" for this area if you would like to purchase it. **West Col "Mgoun Massif" 1:100,000**

This can be bought on-line from <http://www.stanfords.co.uk> for £8.95.

Catalogue number is 44719

### **Further country information**

Further up-to-date travel advice can be had by emailing us, reading our blog and / or consulting the UK FCO website:-

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/>

### **To reserve your place(s) on this course:-**

- Go to our reservation page on our website ([www.nomadicmorocco.com/reserve.htm](http://www.nomadicmorocco.com/reserve.htm)) & complete the details.  
**No payment is required at this stage!** On receipt of your reservation form, we will email you to confirm we are reserving your place(s) & send you an invoice for the deposit based on the details submitted.
- Alternatively, **to arrange a private course**, just email us:- [office@nomadicmorocco.com](mailto:office@nomadicmorocco.com)
- Or contact us through our website