

LIFE IS NOT AN X BOX – 2024 MOROCCO ADVENTURE

I started this project in 2014 and, with the amazing support of sponsors, I am proud to tell you that 2024 saw the 200th young person (15 to 19 or so) join the adventure team.

In August we set off for Marrakech where we spent one day and night in a riad very near the famous Jeema el Fna, a UNESCO listed heritage site in the middle of the market area where the chaos, colour and vibrancy of different cultures collide.

The average day time temperature is 38C to 42C and the team of 23 knew that this adventure was not going to be a stroll in the park!

Our usual local guide Omar, took us all on a tour of the souks, tanneries, artisan areas, spice market and vegetable stalls. Snake charmers, henna ladies and the ever-present danger of being knocked down by mules and their carts, mopeds and narrow alley ways kept us on our toes! Time for shopping in the later afternoon is essential, I am told!

After the first night we got packed up and two air con minibuses took us to Imlil in the Atlas Mountains, some two hours from Marrakech.

We stopped on the way to see the extensive damage that had been caused to several villages as a consequence of the 2023 earthquake. Probably the first time that any of the team had seen such destruction and the consequences for those living in the mountains. A sobering introduction to the next eight days.

The team is very well known, and respected in this small remote town and always such a warm welcome from everyone, young and old.

After sorting our rooms in this lovely Riad Atlas Toubkal, which we have to ourselves for the whole stay, a traditional Berber lunch with mint tea was most welcome. We start a meal together and stay seated until everyone has finished. No mobiles except for photography.

The afternoon trek to the waterfalls set off at 2pm and was a good introduction on how to trek safely and always be aware of your surroundings. Stay together with the team!!

Most of the young people enjoyed the bracing effect of standing under the freezing cold waterfall, which started some 50 feet above them, and then swimming in the pool in the rocks.

Trek back to Imlil and wash and change for dinner at 7pm. A real buzz of excitement at being in an adventure team with many challenges ahead.

After dinner some of the team strolled down to Imlil for shopping and meeting people who knew us so well.

The next six days were a mix of all day treks, cookery and bread making, mule supported trek and visit to Tahanout where the team have always taken gifts for the young people there.

Our last day and night were back to Marrakech. On the way from Imlil we had a short camel trek and packed lunch by the river.

Omar met us at our Riad and took the team on a walk to the Bahia Palace and a different area of the souks where tourists rarely visit. Mint tea and refreshments overlooking the buzz of the souks was such a contrast to the quiet of the mountains.

I am so proud of the young people who really delivered for our team sponsors and I hope that the next adventure will go ahead in 2026.

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