

climb2recovery | mountaineering >>>

enhancing the recovery of veterans
through a year-round programme
of adaptive climbing and mountaineering



on
expedition



1. Team on departure from Imlil village, 1700m

C2R Morocco | June 2023

creating positive memories >>>



2. Chris leading the way whilst setting the steady pace on one of many climbs up to a high pass or 'Tizi'. We enjoyed many amazing landscapes, here, looking back over the previous night's camp at Lac de Infi, 2312m

Ideas, they can be ambitious or reserved, challenging or conservative, basic, or difficult to achieve. The initial plan, to trek for six days, around Mt Toubkal, North Africa's highest mountain (4167m) and then summit on the final day was inevitably going to be challenging.

This first trekking and mountaineering expedition to Morocco for C2R was a mix of all the above, with a dash of culture and Moroccan cuisine for good measure.

Undoubtedly it was a success, measured not in the number of gleaming star reviews, but in the more human centric, kindhearted, support giving, friendly type. The form of success which you can't quite put into numbers (although we did get a 100% summit success rate) it seems more relevant to put into words.

The expedition was more individualistic and meant something different for all involved. After all, we are a dynamic and diverse group of individuals at C2R, with specific and some severely debilitating injuries and illnesses, that require so much more than conventional treatment.

We desire for something more...A more holistic approach that only reveals its beneficial remedies when there comes a deeper connection with the team, earth, nature, people, and the mountains...after all ... "it is not the mountains we conquer but ourselves".

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3. Camp 1 Tachedirt, 2300m. 4. Mick with fresh legs on day 1

>>> **A**rrival in Marrakesh went smoothly, well, all except for Megan whose flight from Scotland was delayed causing her to miss the connecting flight. Meanwhile, in Marrakesh I waited, thinking it was all going to fall apart before the team had even landed...to then read on the group chat that everyone was helping organize a plan to ensure Meg could get on the first flight out the following morning. Good effort!

Once reunited, we all took the short transfer to Marrakesh and settled into some mint tea on a terrace, Chris and I suggested an open discussion of 'hopes & fears' whereby each member, should they wish, share some of their thoughts about the upcoming week. This set a framework for sharing, understanding, support and teamwork. A lot of useful and practical information was communicated which helped one another feel at ease whilst in a comfortable, yet new environment.

We moved to our start point the following morning, a town called Imlil, known jokingly as the Chamonix of the Atlas. Here we sorted our kit, met our local guides (Jamel and 'yippee' Ibrahim), had a coffee, and held a route brief before setting off on day one of six. It was a short, fairly steep climb, through a pine forest from the top of the village to our first pass, and a further 2-hours on a gravel track to reach camp for the night.

climb high, sleep low >>>

Over the next few days, we would learn this fundamental principle of acclimatisation, climb up over a pass, and then down into the valley below, then resting followed by great Moroccan cuisine, and good sleep. This route around Toubkal massif ensures trekkers are well acclimatised, increasing the chances of a successful summit, and minimising the ill effects of altitude sickness.

Each day, the team emerged, out of themselves, their routine at home, their demons their anxieties or fears, as we discussed earlier. It was a real pleasure for Chris and I to see the team gel and help one another, conscious of each of their individual needs. The sum of the whole was greater than each of its individual parts, comes to mind...

A strong team indeed, with 9 C2R members, two of our supporters in Danny and her son, Toby, and Chris and I – guiding the route. This meant we were able to provide a low leader/member ratio, and a duty of care over the members and supporters.

There were some difficult moments, some steep and challenging climbs in the heat of the day and each of us found ourselves challenged at some point throughout the week.

Yet we were all constantly rewarded, with stunning mountain landscapes, shaded riverbeds to cool off, a shower and a bed halfway round, lakeside camping and even a swim!

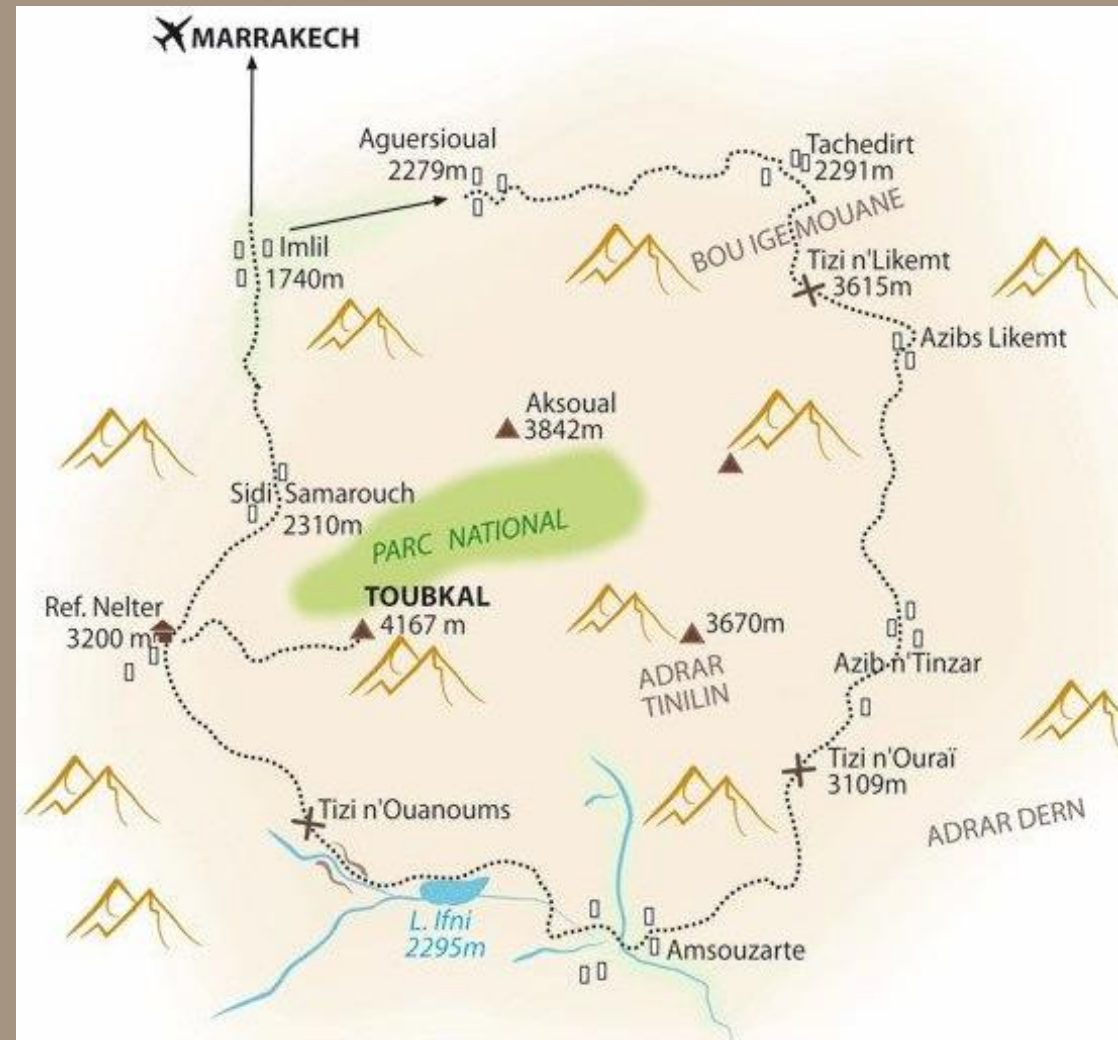


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The value of expeditions >>>

Our expedition taught us to be resourceful, to make use of what we have, and to make the best of it. Providing us with an alternative routine, one that was determined by the weather, the conditions, the rise and fall of the sun, the route and our team's ability and decision making. They offer time to reflect, on the day, yourself, conversations you may have had, all those little interactions, and the journey itself. Whilst trekking around the Toubkal massif we settled into a different routine, gained confidence, challenged ourselves, found our rhythm, and in our own different ways, we recovered.

"If you believe you are ready to take the next step in your recovery journey then you should go for it!"



The planned route, going clockwise, on day 1 we climbed up from Imlil to the base of Tizi n'Likemt. We then climbed over the pass to camp at the shepherd's camp along the river at Azib Likemt. A long 3rd day to our gite in Amousouzarte, then on day 4 we climbed up to Lac Ifni to enjoy a swim. On day 5 we headed to Refuge Nelter via the Tizi n'Ouanoums at over 3600m and to prepare for our assault on Toubkal. An alpine start on day 6 meant we climbed with the sun rising, as a team to the top of North Africa.

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1



2



3



4

1. Looking back from where we came. 2. Descending into Azib Likemt after crossing the pass
3. Ray, Chris and Tom on the summit. 4. Happy campers getting some rest

