

ATLAS QUEST by UTAT

13th Edition: October 3rd to 7th, 2024

A FRESH START!

April 2024

The Atlas Quest is a trail race imbued with the power of the Atlas, combining high altitude with unparalleled sporting challenge. This exceptional experience, true to the original promise of trail running, takes its participants to the heart of Morocco, into the majestic Atlas Mountains (near Djebel Toubkal, the highest peak in North Africa at 4,167 metres. It's a place steeped in history and vibrant culture, where nature is pristine, trails climb like nowhere else in Europe, emotions run deep, and encounters are authentic.

Every runner is a conqueror on these high-altitude trails (from 2620m to 3670m). Beyond the physical effort, there is a deep connection with the terrain ! The wonder of ochre colours, dazzling light, and the captivating scents of the Atlas. A rare moment of life. Far from everything, amidst powerful, arid, and abundant nature, every stride becomes an adventure, every moment a discovery. The Atlas Quest transcends mere racing, merging sport, nature, discovery, and community to create unforgettable moments.

For 12 editions, the Atlas Quest has brought together trail runners from around the world on the plateau of Oukaïmeden, 70 km south of Marrakech (1h30 drive) at an altitude of 2,620 metres. The base camp consists of a temporary village of 1000 m2 and a tent bivouac, decorated and imbued with Berber design and spirit, for a true cultural exchange and total immersion.



A FRESH START

After the Covid years and the devastating earthquake of magnitude 6.8 on September 8, 2023, hope is high for both residents and organizers to welcome tourists, visitors, and trail runners back to the High Atlas. Therefore, it has been decided to give a fresh look to this event, in line with these new challenges, which go beyond those of an ultra-trail race. A new name embodying this ambition naturally emerged, as well as a new graphical representation. The Atlas Quest, the Quest of the Atlas, like a human experience to be lived at least once in a lifetime, truly reflects the vision of the organizing team, placing even more emphasis on the High Atlas and unwavering solidarity of the organizers towards the population. The Atlas Quest By Utat is much more than a race: it's a rendezvous with a country and its people, a journey and an adventure in the heart of an exceptional region.

« For 15 years, with my team, we have nurtured the dream of an international trail event nestled in the majestic mountains of the High Atlas. Our ambition goes beyond sport: it is a bold initiative combining economy, media, and sport, aiming to reveal the exceptional potential of this land and to contribute to the concrete development of the region.

These 15 years have been rich in shared memories with over 4,000 runners, the local inhabitants, and incredible volunteers. The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken our journey, resulting in two successive cancellations in 2020 and 2021. In 2022, we were finally able to offer the long-awaited event.

Atlas Quest is a major socio-economic player in Oukaïmeden. During the COVID period, we supported the inhabitants with the "1 basket for 1 household" operation. After the September 2023 earthquake, we made our resources available to the affected villages, delivering tents, mattresses, and even creating "emergency school kits". The challenges faced with the territory strengthen our conviction: it is time to commit fully to bring forth an exceptional global event.

Atlas Quest must play a crucial role, transcending mere sport. It embodies the pursuit of an ideal where sport becomes a means of sharing and mutual enrichment. Atlas Quest symbolizes a quest far beyond the material, an obvious choice in our journey towards the ideal. » Cyrille Sismondini, President of Sports Nature Development

AN ADVENTURE IN THE BERBER LANDS AND ON THE ROOF OF NORTH AFRICA

The High Atlas range peaks at 4,167 metres with Mount Toubkal. It serves as a long frontier spanning over 700 kilometres, separating the oceanic and subtropical, warm, and rather humid climate from the semi-desert and continental climate.

The High Atlas asserts itself as a land where Berber traditions and culture remain alive. Far from modern traffic routes, one discovers the azibs (shepherds' shelters made of dry stone) and the small houses of douars (small villages) that seem completely timeless, scattered here and there in this vast high-altitude desert.

Here, hospitality is a founding principle. The Berbers, in their improbable villages built on mountainsides, live in autonomy ! In a simplicity that prompts reflection on our own way of life. The tranquillity of the inhabitants contrasts with a rugged, wild, and magnificent nature. Here, at every turn of the trail, one discovers a peaceful herd, a lush valley bottom, a fresh and singing stream, a village bustling with life, or a pass to climb exceeding 3,000 metres in altitude.

TRAILS THAT OFFER, ESCAPE AND DISCOVERY !

To participate in the Atlas Quest is to discover a country and a culture which is at once foreign and new, yet not so distant:

Here, mountains mean altitude ! All races take place at an average of 2,400m with the highest point at 3,690m. This would be higher than any race in Europe. altitude enthusiasts!

Air connections between major European cities and Marrakech are numerous and frequent, giving a change of scenery after a flight of 2 to 4 hours!

Numbers

25 nationalities
represented
13th edition in 2024
100 volunteers
120 muleteers and
local guides

4000 runners since
2009, including 37%
women



SPORTING ADVENTURES: 4 DAYS, 4 COURSES, 5 RACE FORMATS



ULTRA-TRAIL ATLAS TOUBKAL 105km / 8000 m D+

The start (and finish) is in Oukaïmeden, at 2,620 metres above sea level. The course ranges between 1,700 and 3,700 metres above sea level.

The race requires a high level of self-sufficiency, and the trails are technical. A section of the course, from km 40 to km 80, crosses one of the most remote and isolated parts of the High Atlas, without roads or GSM coverage.

The course is marked by 19 medical checkpoints, including 6 with refreshments.

Maximum time: 40 hours

Start: Friday, October 4th at midnight (Friday night to Saturday)

Winner: approximately 18 hours (Record 17:36:13 – 2022 Guillaume Beauxis)



MARATHON DE L'ATLAS 42km / 2600 m D+

The race starts in Oukaïmeden at an altitude of 2,620 m, with the highest point of the course at 3,180 m and the lowest at 1,950 m.

2 refreshment stations and 5 checkpoints are provided.

The Atlas Marathon is a demanding route, with the fastest runners finishing in approximately 4 hours and 30 minutes.

Maximum time: 12 hours

Start: Saturday, October 5th at 6 a.m.

Winner: approximately 4 hours and 30 minutes (Record 04:33:28 – 2014 Rachid Elmorabity)



La VIRÉE D'IKKISS 26km / 1400 m D+

An unforgettable hike in the High Atlas!

The race starts in Oukaïmeden at an altitude of 2,620 m, with the highest point of the course at 2,950 m and the lowest at 1,830 m.

The Ikkiss Adventure is a short race packed with maximum thrills!

26 km of varied terrain. From lush green valleys to dry high-altitude environments, technical trails to tranquil paths, the fastest will finish in approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes.

1 refreshment station and 4 checkpoints

Maximum time: 8 hours

Start: Sunday, October 6th at 9am

Winner: approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes (current record 02:23:20 – 2016 Rachid Elmorabity)



CHALLENGE DE L'ATLAS 42km + 26km / 4000 m D+ cumul)

The Challenge combines the Atlas Marathon (42 km & 2,600 m elevation gain) on one day and the Ikkiss Adventure (26 km & 1,400 m elevation gain) on the next day. The ranking is based on the sum of the times achieved in each race. Two races in two days. A real challenge, covering a total of 68 km and 4,000 metres of elevation gain. It is also a prerequisite for registration in the UTAT (105 km - 8,000 m elevation gain).



L'AMAZIGH TRAIL 12 km/ 600m D+

A quick and accessible excursion to discover the beauty of the trails of Oukaïmeden, a true mountain course with breathtaking panoramas!

The essence of trail running in the mountains. A route close to Oukaïmeden, with ascents and descents offering stunning views!

The Amazigh Trail is an opportunity for runners of all types (regular, occasional, sprinters... and even hikers). The race is open to a wide audience, aged 16 and over, looking for a first quick experience of trail running over a short distance. An opportunity to discover the beauty of the High Atlas range.

Maximum time: 4 hours

Start: Sunday, October 6th at 10 a.m.

TRAVEL

As the organizer of the Atlas Quest by UTAT, the association Sport Nature Développement does everything to facilitate the stay of the runners and their families by including numerous services:

- Upon greeting on arrival at the airport (from Thursday, October 3rd) ! by the organization's hostesses !
- Bus transfers to the Oukaïmeden plateau (approximately 1.5 hours).
- Two accommodation options: a Berber-designed camp with ergonomic layout conducive to exchanges, discussions, and meetings... consisting of around one hundred 16m² tents, designed to accommodate 4 to 5 people each, decorated and equipped with mattresses, offering a unique experience close to the festivities. Alternatively, the "dormitory" option (CAF Chalet), which offers a bit more comfort (and heating) for those who prefer!
- Toubkal Experience: as a prelude or epilogue to the event, Atlas Quest offers the ascent of Toubkal (4167m), the highest peak in North Africa. Ideal for altitude acclimatization or post-event recovery!
- 2024 Entertainment Program: throughout the stay, guided tours (Toubkal National Park, Berber villages, rock carvings...), outdoor cinema, concerts, fitness activities...

Registrations 2024

<https://trail-atlasquest.com/en/registration/>

Information on <https://trail-atlasquest.com/en/>

[Photos available here with compulsory photo credit](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/162QyAkaHMagB5-g9fPJbL8qE9SLAsEEg)

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/162QyAkaHMagB5-g9fPJbL8qE9SLAsEEg>

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