

ATLAS

QUEST



MOROCCO
OUKAÏMEDEN
PLATEAU
HIGH ATLAS

03
07
OCT.
2024

International Trail Running Event


SOMMAIRE

ATLAS QUEST / the breath of the Atlas

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EDITORIAL



The 2024 edition will be synonymous with a new beginning for UTAT. An event that is reinventing itself to be closer to its core values. This new edition, named ATLAS QUEST, will take place in October on the Oukaïmeden plateau, 70 km from Marrakech. Essentially, it is a long-distance trail running competition on natural terrain, gathering hundreds of participants from about twenty nationalities.

In reality, we have always wanted this event to be more than just a race. When Cyrille Sismondini discovered the Atlas Mountains in 2007, he not only fell in love with this fabulous region but also dreamed of making it known. ATLAS QUEST (formerly UTAT) was born in 2009 with a dual objective: to create a world-renowned event to introduce trail runners worldwide to a massif of rare beauty, and to make this event an unforgettable life experience.

We have always expressed our attachment to this land and its people. The seismic events of 2023 forced us to cancel the race, leading our equipment and volunteers to support the local populations. A collective effort that once again shows our closeness to this territory that had lost everything. Continuing this adventure, reviving this race, was not an option, but a firm conviction.

A race, an ultra-trail obviously, but also a «moment» during which participants share their sports experience and the territory itself with those who live there. A detail that characterizes our organization: the logistics are managed by mules and their muleteers. The race and local life converge.

In this press kit and in the press releases that will follow until the big day, you will discover the peculiarities of this event, including the different courses that give everyone a chance to try their luck, and the bonds this event has woven with Morocco and the Atlas Mountains. ATLAS QUEST is the first ultra-trail on the African continent, and there is a magic here, created not only by the beauty of the surroundings - as we often say, this place is incredible - but also by the community that shares a common destiny during these few days.



LETTER TO THE RUNNERS

ATLAS QUEST / Breath of the Atlas

The race, the trails, the kilometres. The effort, of course, but it's so much more than that. The race, the trails, the kilometres and the pleasure of being there, of experiencing this intensity. You've imagined it, you've been waiting for it. Well, now it's here.

You're in Morocco, in the Atlas Mountains. You'll be right at the heart of a country, a culture that has stood the test of time, an unspoilt geography. You're running and you're finally disconnected from everything, stride after stride, you face the distance, but you're in resonance with the route, and with this place where you've chosen to be.

You're far from everything and all around you, nature is beautiful and above all powerful, arid yet generous. You soak up the ochre colours, the light and the fragrances that give form to this place.

This wonderment, it's ATLAS QUEST .

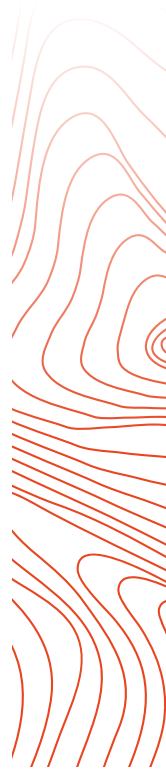
You're a link in a great chain. You and all the others from 25 different countries with whom you'll be sharing this very special week.

Notice the glances and smiles, these are the signs of what unites you. You're sharing a moment out of this world at the ATLAS QUEST camp, the camp that everyone talks about, in the heart of the Atlas Mountains.

You can see that energy and passion are flowing, that bonds are being forged.

All these elements converge. You haven't just come here to race, you've also come for a moment in life like no other.

You knew that...





ATLAS QUEST

The UTAT, born from the passion and imagination of Cyrille Sismondini, was a dream to explore his adopted territory, the mountains of Morocco, and to meet the local inhabitants. Today, this dream evolves as the UTAT becomes ATLAS QUEST, embodying our values more fully. We are not just a race, but an event anchored in a timeless place, a place where memories have deep meaning.

For over 10 years, this international event has resonated in the international world of trail running. It has carved out a name and identity at the heart of the trail community. Despite the challenges posed by the Covid years, and the terrible seismic episodes of 2023 experienced by the territory, ATLAS QUEST has stood strong. Supporting the local populations and the Atlas was an obvious choice; the entire event has been dedicated to serving this place. Ready to gain new momentum in 2024 and beyond, its international appeal grows alongside the booming discipline of trail running. Some of the greatest names in the sport have claimed victories here, including Andy Symonds of England, Julien Chorier, Jules-Henri Gabioud of Switzerland, the late Andrea Huser, Guillaume Beauxis, and of course Rachid El-Morabity of Morocco.

We have always cherished our deep connection with this land and its people. Continuing this journey and revitalizing this race was not just an option, but a deeply rooted conviction. Come find a new breath in the Atlas, experience rare and unique moments and encounters. With every stride, you will feel the essence of this land and its culture, and meet a community rich in sharing and stories.



5 REASONS

TO COME TO ATLAS QUEST IN 2024

1

TO RUN

This is one of the reasons to come to Morocco and take part in one of the 4 ATLAS QUEST events in 2024. To run, to feel free and to test your limits. Whether you're a beginner or an expert runner, it's both a pretext and an objective.

2

TO DISCOVER

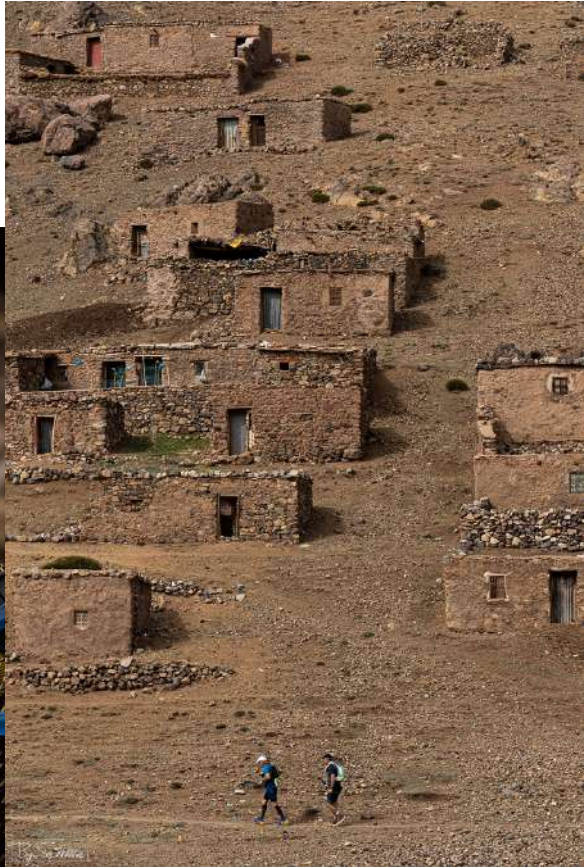
In Morocco, whether you know the country or not, you'll always discover new villages, new landscapes, a way of life, its culture and customs.

3

TO MEET

It's the encounters with others that change the way you look at things, exchanges with the local people and with the other competitors who have come here in search of a change of scenery, of discovery and of moments spent sharing the same passion.





**MORE THAN JUST A TRAIL,
IT'S A JOURNEY, IT'S A DISCOVERY**

4 TO RECHARGE YOUR BATTERIES

Beyond your own sporting challenge, this is first and foremost a way to recharge your batteries, to rediscover simple values and emotions, far from the hustle and bustle of our European lives.

5 TO DISCONNECT

It may be the fashionable term, and no doubt one that's overused, but there are places, times and situations where you will be alone, in that world of silence and contemplation, where you'll find yourself.



ATLAS QUEST, KEY FACTS

AND FIGURES

LOCATION

Morocco / Oukaïmeden

Moroccan High Atlas, Oukaïmeden plateau at an altitude of 2,600 m, 80 km south of Marrakesh


DATES

3rd to 7th October 2024

EVENTS

4 races (from 12 km to 105 km)

1 challenge (42 km + 26 km)



ATLAS QUEST, KEY FACTS

AND FIGURES

ATLAS QUEST KEY FACTS



2009

Year of creation

No. 1

Ultra Trail on the
African continent

+3000

Runners in 10 years

37%

women

+100

volunteers

35

nationalities

120

muletiers-guide

69%

of participants extend their
stay in Morocco

40

health
professionals

100

Moroccan runners

ATLAS QUEST DISTANCES

There's a race for everyone



A
12Km

Amazigh* Trail

(500 m climbing)

The Amazigh Trail is an opportunity for all runners (regulars, occasional runners, sprinters, etc.) to discover nature-style running. This event is aimed at a wide range of people (aged 16 and over) looking for their first experience of trail running or an explosive effort over a short distance. The Amazigh Trail is open to walkers, making it the ideal experience for those accompanying them.

* "Free man" in the Berber language



A
26Km

La virée d'Ikkis

(1,400 m elevation change)

The Virée d'Ikkiss is a short trail but it's got a maximum of thrills!

The start is at the Oukaimeden resort, at an altitude of 2,620 m. **The course takes in altitudes between 1,830 and 2,950 m.**

You'll discover a variety of trails, from technical paths to rolling tracks, from high desert altitudes to lush green valleys.

FROM 12KM TO 105 KM, 4 RACES AND A CHALLENGE (42 KM + 26 KM)



Atlas Marathon

(2,600 m elevation change)

The race starts at the Oukaïmeden resort, at an altitude of 2,620 m.

With one section at an altitude of more than 3,000 m, the course is technical, particularly between kilometres 20 and 36.

Less formidable than its older sibling, the ATLAS QUEST, the Atlas Marathon remains a demanding course.



Atlas Toubkal Ultra Trail

(8,000 m elevation change)

The start is at the Oukaïmeden station, at an altitude of 2,620 m. The course takes in altitudes between 1,700 and 3,700 m.

The ATLAS QUEST is characterised by the technical nature of the trails and the level of autonomy required. In particular, the race covers one of the wildest and most isolated mountain areas in the High Atlas (between kilometres 40 and 80), with no infrastructure (telephone, roads, electricity, etc.)



MOUNTAIN MOROCCO

Less than 4 hours from Europe's major capitals, another side to Morocco.

Although in the Western collective unconscious, Morocco evokes the Mediterranean, with heat and desert, this country is above all bordered by the Atlantic Ocean. And while the country offers us exciting cities such as Casablanca, Marrakesh and Essaouira, we mustn't forget that mountains occupy more than two-thirds of Moroccan territory and include four main ranges: the Rif in the north, the Middle Atlas in the east, the High Atlas and the Anti-Atlas. Several peaks exceed 4,000m, with Jebel Toubkal, culminating at 4,167 m, being the highest of them all.

Though every facet of Morocco is enticing, it is this one that we have chosen to highlight.

The Oukaïmeden plateau is only 70 km from Marrakesh by road. And this city, served by direct flights, is less than 4 hours from the major European capitals.

Your journey to the ATLAS QUEST passes through Marrakesh, which can be a stopover on the way there or on the way back, but your experience will begin as soon as you leave the city and see the Atlas Mountains taking shape before you. Whether you're a runner or a companion, we promise you'll have an extraordinary time.



THE INCREDIBLE RUNNERS' VILLAGE

At an altitude of 2,600 m, the Oukaïmeden plateau is home to around a hundred tents, each that can accommodate 4 people. Huge marquees are also erected for the reception and catering areas. Guided tours are organised to help participants make the most of the site and discover the riches of the region. These include tours of rock engravings dating back thousands of years, local flora and fauna, Berber culture and the beauty of its architecture. Through these activities, ATLAS QUEST aims to promote local heritage.

ATLAS QUEST

A race committed to the environment

As a major player in the Moroccan mountain world, ATLAS QUEST has a duty to set an example when it comes to the environment. This eco-responsible approach is part of a genuine desire to preserve its own environment, the home of the locals and the playground of the runners, the Toubkal National Park. Everything that's brought into the area is taken away again or recycled. An entire waste management system has been established, including the cleaning up of Oukāmeden, collecting and sorting waste at the checkpoints along the route and finally removing it by mule for recycling in Marrakesh. In this way, at every stage, everyone involved is a link in the chain that is vital to the smooth running of the project.

THE ATLAS QUEST BRINGS TOGETHER THE THREE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.



1. ECONOMIC

- «596 days of cumulative work for local contributors for a 4-day event.
- 75% of the organization budget injected into the local area.

2. SOCIETAL

- 40 participations offered to local talents (race bibs / medical examination / equipment).
- First aid training for mountain guides.

3. ENVIRONNEMENTAL

- Exchange of empty bottles for full ones.
- Reusable utensils for meals.
- Maintenance of damaged trails.
- Discovery of heritage and guided tours



ATLAS QUEST

Runners' health and safety as a priority

Each ATLAS QUEST event offers runners the permanent support of volunteers who provide safety, supplies and health care. The medical staff comprises experienced professionals, from doctors and nurses to chiropractors, osteopaths and physiotherapists.

They will be on hand 24 hours a day to look after the runners at the various refreshment stations, with a helicopter landing zone should they need to be evacuated.

To provide for emergency, 2 tonnes of medical equipment is transported from France. In addition to a large quantity of oxygen bottles, the shipment includes:

- 15 emergency medical kits
- 3 cardiac monitors
- 5 defibrillators





THEY CAME TO ATLAS QUEST

and can tell you all about it...

Patrick Bohard

Team Hoka

The first thing that comes to mind is the beauty of the starting point. It's a very unusual place, with this big, old-fashioned reception building, all these tents in the middle of a flat area, with the Atlas Mountains all around. The race also has its own special characteristics, with altitude (the start at 2,000 m and some stages at 3,000 m), water management and, above all, the variety of landscapes, some arid and dry, others humid and green. Sheep are never far away, and swarms of barefoot children form at the entrance to each village and end up running with us. It's a tough, technical trail that's a great human adventure in all its simplicity.



Sébastien Talotti

Ambassador

If you want to discover and be inspired by a way of life and a return to true values less than 4 hours from France... look no further! The simplicity and genuineness of the Berber people are fascinating and allow us to disconnect from our "automated" world. My aim at ATLAS QUEST is to wear a race number, to observe and understand, to meet people to exchange ideas and learn from them. I thoroughly recommend this event that's so full of life and expertly organised by an experienced team that listens to trail runners in search of that "true trail spirit".



Maryline Nakache

Team Cimalp

I've done the ATLAS QUEST challenge twice and both times it was a magical experience.

It's a complete change of scene in this remote area... Magnificent scenery, visiting little Berber villages, children cheering you on and the elders showing you the way... The camp is also a time for sharing with other runners and volunteers. It's like one big family!





ATLAS

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