

KASBAH DU TOUBKAL

MOROCCO'S PREMIER
MOUNTAIN RETREAT



WELCOMES YOU
SAFELY

Pack your bags - and get ready to roll!

Morocco opens it's doors to tourists as
international flights to the Kingdom resume

On June 15th Morocco opened its borders to visitors from the UK, along with those from EU countries (except Lithuania), the US, Canada, Russia, China and 'any UN member country that is not on the B list of the Moroccan Ministry of Health'. Travellers from these key tourism markets will be permitted entry if they have a vaccination certificate and/or a negative PCR test taken less than 48 hours before entry into the country.

We are pleased that Kasbah du Toubkal is now open again after its forced closure. Kasbah du Toubkal was one of the first hotels to be recognised by the Ministry of Tourism, fulfilling the Covid protocols in their Welcome Safely to Morocco program.

The Kasbah's rural, mountain location, lots of natural fresh air ventilation, plenty of open spaces and rooms all opening directly to the outside means the Kasbah is inherently well placed to be a lower risk for Covid. Vaccination in Imlil and the surrounding valleys is well advanced, with the vaccination team planning on staying in the area until vaccination bringing those eligible down to seventeen years of age is completed. The vaccination take up is also high.

The wait to welcome you to the High Atlas Mountains has been long and, at times, wearying, but we sincerely hope that it will have been worthwhile when you once again reach the top of the mule track from Imlil, pass through the gate into the Kasbah's beautiful gardens, and to soak in our hammam to ease the stress of the last eighteen months.

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**Kasbah's Mohamed Ait
Lcaid gets his vaccination**

Solo Female Travel: Experiencing Moroccan Tourism During COVID-19

Let's talk about Western prejudice around female solo travel in a Muslim country. I am a 24-year-old woman from Sweden currently solo-traveling through Morocco. Simply reading that sentence will induce feelings of discomfort and fear in many people. The basis of such emotions, however, is grounded in misinformation and Islamophobia, which from my experience, lacks more truth than it contains.

Questions around safety and women's social status rained down upon me as, pre-departure, I described my travel plans. Three months, two backpacks, one mission: to explore sustainable tourism in Morocco, visiting various projects and areas known for such practices. And I will not lie, such thoughts circled through my brain too on multiple occasions. And they continue to do so whenever I feel under threat.

But I am now two months into my journey and with confidence can say that not once have I been mistreated. Rather the complete opposite, to the point where my eyes have teared up in utter awe of the hospitality, gentleness, and warmth shown by the people I've encountered. We are usually only told the stories that went horribly wrong. To counter-balance that narrative here is my experience.

From the day I set foot in Marrakech, I have constantly felt watched. But as one of the only tourists in town, with blonde curls and a backpack the size of a small village, that comes with the territory. And the spectators have been all from funny to sassy; flirty to polite; humble, helpful, hassling. The one thing they've all had in common though is an unwavering



I'd much rather live in connected caution than in separated safety.

sense of respect. I have travelled widely in my life, and from my findings that quality is rare. Rare, but precious and much, much appreciated.

Another perk of mingling with Moroccan people is the happy and humble approach to life amongst them. Ninety-eight percent of the people I encounter on a daily basis smile at me.

I would argue that the same statistics ring true in my home country, but in reverse. Though many believe getting mugged or murdered to be the biggest danger of solo-travel, the most commonly faced issue is loneliness.

And if loneliness, which kills more people than does a poor diet, is the biggest threat, how come no one questions a solo-trip through Scandinavia? The narrative around travel across the Middle East and Africa is often based on nothing but fear of the unknown. Of course, horrible things do happen, and more likely so in places of severe poverty, but I have none such to report back.

Instead, the welcoming culture of Morocco has made me feel at ease, it has made me feel connected. That is the narrative I would like to promote, the one of a country which welcomes its guests with unparalleled hospitality. Travelling solo through Sweden would be much more of an isolating experience, with locals avoiding eye contact and small talk at all cost. And on a personal level, I'd much rather live in connected caution than in separated safety.

Talking all things small reminds me of how I felt when my phone gave up on me mid-drive, somewhere along the winding roads of the Rif Mountains in

the north of the Morocco. It was my only source of navigation and the sun was about to set for the night. Now, it is not common practice in Moroccan culture to travel on your own, especially not as a female, yet when I pulled up next to a roadside cafe in a rural community, I was welcomed with open arms, no questions asked.

There wasn't a single woman in the establishment, only men and boys of all ages. I was desperately trying to remember the French word for charger whilst zig-zagging between everyone's eyes looking in my direction. The young man working in the cafe waved me over to the till. He promptly led me in behind the bar, put my phone on charge, and fed me fresh mint tea and home-made bread. We couldn't exchange much in the form of verbal language, but our eyes spoke volumes, mine with gratitude and relief, his with curiosity and care.

They say it's all in the eye of the beholder, I say they've hit the bull's eye with that. The few times I've felt unsafe during this trip, nothing bad has ever happened. So although the situations might have involved elements of danger, most of this fear will have stemmed from preconceived ideas. And attempting to break free from as many such as I possibly can, I invite everyone else to do the same. Here's why.

As I walk down an alleyway of the Marrakech Medina,



I hear rapid footsteps approaching. Instinctively my shoulders tense and I get ready for whatever is coming my way. As I turn a corner, I'm met by two school-girls who are splitting a bar of chocolate. It's be-

ing carefully measured, ensuring an equal experience of indulgence. One of them spots me coming their way. She quickly breaks her half in half and reaches it out towards me. "Cava, madame?" she says, smiling from eye to eye. "Chocolate?"

From the day I set foot in Marrakech, I have constantly felt watched, but when paired with the social culture of curiosity that is fostered in this country, that is something to appreciate. That is a way into the society here, a warm welcome, an acceptance. By meeting the eyes of the beholder and greeting them right back, you cross the bridge from unknown to known – just like that.

I have yet to find people more set in their ways, yet accepting of others than those I've encountered here. As a female solo traveler in Morocco, I have been included into society in ways I haven't experienced at home. Through shifting the lens onto what there is to gain from an experience such as this, by separating fear from fact, adventure awaits. If you don't believe me, go there yourself and see. That way you'll also get to enjoy some sweet, sweet mint tea!

(This article was first seen in Morocco World News)



Blue Peter Flies the World - Morocco

There can hardly be a Brit alive who doesn't remember Blue Peter, the famous BBC children's television programme. First broadcast in 1958, it's still running strong, and after more than five thousand editions, is now the longest-running children's TV show in the world. In this recording, broadcast in 1968, Valerie Singleton, John Noakes and Peter Purvis, once described and the most famous presenting team in the world, take us on a journey by Land Rover to the then mystical country of Morocco.



Environmentally conscious - or simply greenwashing?



Greenwashing: *behaviour or activities that make people believe that a company is doing more to protect the environment than it really is*

Sustainability Editor at Condé Nast Traveller magazine, author of *The Green Edit - Travel*, and founder of eco-luxury resource Bouteco, Juliet Kinsman knows more than most about how hotels can contribute to the environment and go beyond simply 'greenwashing' to promote their commercial operations.

At a time when the world is rushing back to holidays, both at home and abroad, and hotels are trying to fill rooms that have been empty for almost eighteen months, how can the general public tell whether their choice is truly environmentally conscious or simply using the phrase to boost sales. But the choice goes far beyond simply the walls and gardens of the hotel. In this Forbes article, Kinsman outlines the five main points to look for – and needless to say, Kasbah du Toubkal gets a mention.



*Kasbah du Toubkal is one of only five hotels in Africa considered by **BOUTECO** to be the most beautiful, sustainably-minded hotels that have a positive impact on their communities.*

KASBAH DU TOUBKAL

Atlas Mountains, Morocco, Africa

The world's most special Berber mountain resort — and the inspiration for our documentary *Changing Worlds in the Atlas Mountains* — Kasbah du Toubkal is an extraordinary community-run lodge in the High Atlas which empowers local Berbers to host guests of its 14 rooms for remote off-the-grid escapes, within an hour and a half's drive of Marrakech. Set up in 1995 to support the local Berber people by creating an economic engine for their community in one of the hardest to reach but beautiful hiking areas of North Africa.

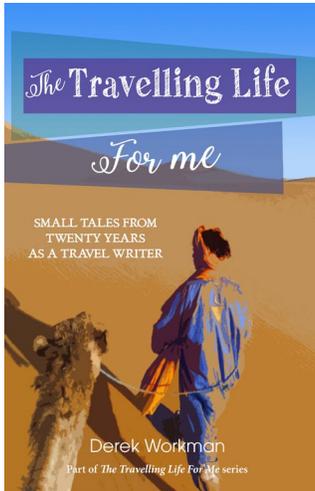
Bouteco loves: One of the founders noticed girls from the local hilltop communities weren't going to school: it was too difficult for them to get there, and it meant walking hours and crossing rivers and slippery slopes. There are cultural reasons, also, but by renting an apartment near a government school where they could live in the week, they presented a solution. As well as providing accommodation, they recruited a responsible, caring housemother to host. Through donations, the charity Education For All now hosts six dedicated boarding houses, and they've helped hundreds get a secondary education.

The Travelling Life For Me

by Derek Workman

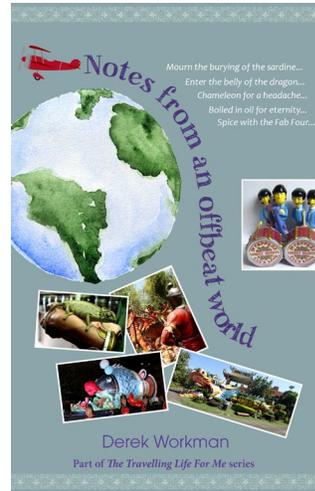
“Derek Workman doesn't just drop in on the places he writes about and jot down first impressions. He immerses himself in the daily rhythms and quirks of where he lives or visits, affectionately catching offbeat aspects and moments, sometimes in the guise of a flummoxed curmudgeon, who in fact can't hide his enjoyment of the people and places he introduces us to. His readers will enjoy them, and him, too.”

(A review taken from Amazon.es, *The Travelling Life For Me*)



The Travelling Life For Me

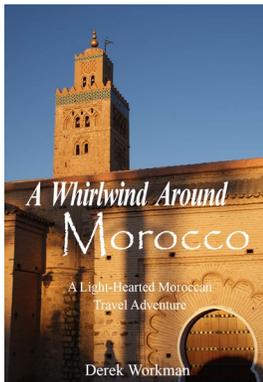
In more than twenty years as a travel writer people never seem to believe me when I tell them it can be a very lonely job. To pass the time I write short stories for my own pleasure about things I have seen during the day or places I've lived and travelled. The result, *The Travelling Life For Me*



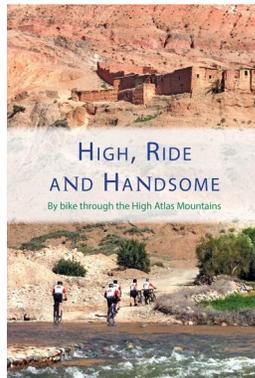
Notes from an Offbeat World

Spend enough of your life travelling and you will inevitably come across a fair amount of the weird and wonderful. Often it's simply a moment when you least expect it but gave you a giggle nonetheless. *Notes* is a compilation of such weird, wonderful and giggles from over twenty years as a travel writer

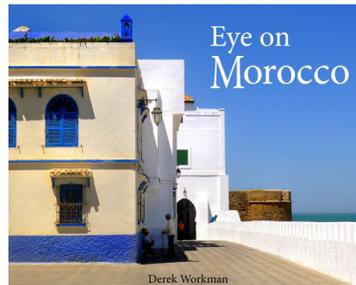
Available for immediate download from 
Click on the cover image.



A selection of light-hearted yarns from a two-week wizz around Morocco



The ups and downs of a bike ride through the High Atlas Mountains



A visual wander through the people and places of the glorious Kingdom of Morocco



The sights, the colour and the mystic of Marrakech Medina in images.

 FREE download 

Buy a copy of either *The Travelling Life For Me* or *Notes from an Offbeat World*, send an email [HERE](#) to receive a copy of *A Whirlwind around Morocco* **free of charge**

Reviews for *A Whirlwind Around Morocco* on 

On excellent read about one man's journey through Morocco. Informative and a great travelogue. Really enjoyed it.

I found this booklet just enough to whet the appetite! Genuinely funny moments were excellently described, and yet there was plenty of information to pick up too.

Derek workman has written a 'booklet' sized travelogue that's engaging and interesting from the first paragraph. Looking forward to reading more by this travel writer.

In The Media

Faraway Lucy



3 Days in Marrakech Itinerary: The Best Way to See Marrakech
for trekking the Atlas Mountains

Morocco's Most Underrated Cities and Places to Visit in 2021



When you get out of your rusty, rattling local taxi cab from Marrakech and find yourself in the Atlas Mountains you will witness a people that has been living in tune with nature for hundreds of years. Simple hotels and resorts without any special vision can be found all over the place, but if you want more "class" then try the Kasbah Du Toubkal. Run by a British family to oversee local philanthropy and sustainable eco-management of the region, the Kasbah is a refreshing way that eco-resorts and getaways interact with and connect with the locals. All the staff and meals are local and the building was constructed to embrace the natural sun and airflow from the Atlas Mountains above. When I was there I took a donkey ride up a steep path that led up to the resort. That in itself is an experience I will never forget.

(Taken from *The 5 Best Eco-Friendly Destinations to Visit Around the World*)

Moroccan Cuisine: 8 Traditional Street Foods You Must Try in Morocco



Igudar': Amazigh Granaries Considered World's Oldest Banks



5th Indiana Jones to Film in Morocco This Summer



Travel to Morocco: Major Moroccan Cities and How to Get Around



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Click on image for article

(With thanks to Morocco World News)

WITH YOUR COMFORT AND SECURITY IN MIND

Kasbah du Toubkal and Covid-19



Thanks to the strict controls put in place by Moroccan authorities, the reported cases of Covid-19 in the Kingdom are much lower than almost anywhere in Europe. While tourism is immensely important to the country, those controls will stay in place until visitors can be welcomed with a sense of personal security – and with the warmth of Moroccan culture, you will be made very welcome indeed.

Surrounded by beautiful countryside, with fresh mountain air, the Kasbah has spacious gardens and diverse open areas where guests can remain in their own social group or relax individually, while still maintaining social distancing following all recommended safety guidelines as put forward by the WHO (World Health Authority).

The structure and location of the Kasbah, set as it is on a hill-top above the village of Imil, with the only access being by foot or mule, creates a venue with a lower risk of possible infection spreading.

Most of our rooms are effectively stand-alone rooms in the gardens, so are less enclosed than in most hotels. With the majority of the rooms having windows on more than one side (three of the tower rooms have windows on all four sides) there is a free flow of fresh air, meaning air conditioning isn't necessary. In the unfortunate event a guest should show symptoms of the virus, we have a self-contained house that can be used for self-isolation. We will continue monitoring the situation, ensuring we do everything possible to create a safe, secure and enjoyable experience for guests.

As part of our commitment to safety, we brought in external auditors to run a course for our staff, to train them in how to minimize the risk of spreading Covid-19, and assist us in preparing protocols to deal with the current situation and beyond. You can read the full document [HERE](#).

In order for you to plan, and have a holiday to look forward to in these current uncertain times, we are allowing new bookings which the full knowledge that you will be able to postpone your holiday to a future date if the current situation continues, or if there is another lockdown due to coronavirus that makes travel impossible. As part of our commitment to guests, we offer the following additional Flexible Cancellation Policy during the pandemic for new bookings:

- (i) Up to 90 days before departure for reasons related to COVID pandemic, you may postpone your stay with no penalty, and receive a credit note valid for 12 months.
- (ii) If Morocco is closed or your Country Of Departure is closed on or up to 21 days before your departure date due to COVID you may have a credit note valid for 12 months or a full refund.

If you have any further questions, please contact us on **+44 (0)1883 744667** or email us at bookings@discover.ltd.uk

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