

# kasbahdutoubkal

MOROCCO'S PREMIER MOUNTAIN RETREAT

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## A breath of fresh mountain air...

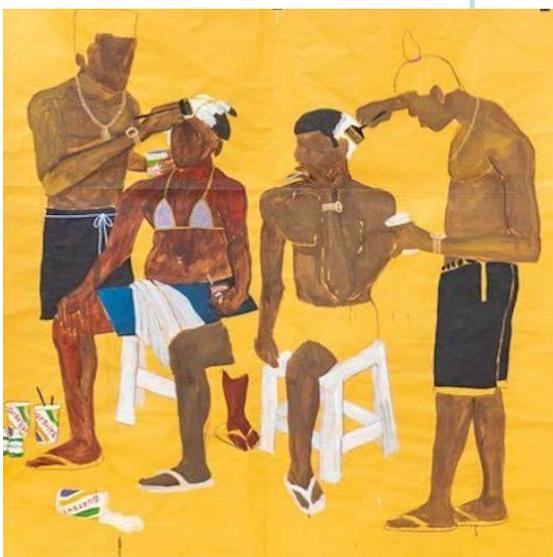
After a tortuous couple of years life is almost back to normal, in fact, as far as the Kasbah is concerned, it's almost better than normal, with bookings for Autumn up to pre-Covid times, a pretty sure sign that people need a breath of fresh mountain air after holding it for so long, waiting to see what the next months would bring.

Whether it's a chance to relax, to stretch the muscles with a trek, or enjoy the colour and food of Morocco, the world's press are reporting on the friendliness and delights of the country, as the links in this issue of the newsletter show. More especially, this year the Toubkal National Park, the first national park in Morocco, has a programme of events to celebrate its 80th anniversary. And while you are in the area, it's worth visiting the Ecomuseum, the only one of its kind in the country.

A lot to see and a lot to do, and we hope to share it with you soon.

## Official launch of the international campaign "Morocco, Land of Light"

The campaign, launched on April 21, aims to position Morocco among the world's most coveted tourist destinations and to strengthen its trendy image, especially among new generations of travelers.



## Marrakech Is World's Third Friendliest City

Morocco has always been a gateway; not only to the African continent but to the Arab world as a whole. Marrakech stands out as one of the more accessible cities, with a pleasing mix of traditional (spice markets, the labyrinthine medina) and modern (luxury hotels, the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech). Marrakech has earned a recent reputation for being a hub for Africa's diasporic art world—stop by the Museum of Contemporary African Art Al Maaden to sample some of the best.

Condé Nast  
**Traveler**

# From NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

## Meet the adventurer: Morocco's first female mountain guide

Hailing from the Atlas Mountains, Hafida Hdoubane became one of Morocco's first female mountain guides in 1994 and has been leading hiking groups in the country ever since.



## How the Red City is embracing its green side

Its imposing clay walls have earned Marrakech the moniker the 'Red City', but dig a little deeper and the city's green side reveals itself too, from rooftops teeming with wild birds to artisans upcycling used materials in the heart of the medina.



## Marrakech's Rahba Kedima Top Global Spice Market

The souks of the city's walled Medina are intoxicating — none more so than Spice Square, as this bustling plaza is commonly known. Stalls and hole-in-the-wall shops offer everything from star anise to cinnamon sticks and saffron strands at relatively low prices, while the centre of the square is abuzz with people selling anything from argan oil to plant-based cosmetics.



## Morocco's top five food experiences, from mint tea to tagine

Often described as an 'assault on the senses', Morocco's sights, sounds and smells linger long in the memory. Its food, too, is an unforgettable experience — immerse yourself in this eclectic cuisine, be it through street food tours or hands-on classes.



# The Joy of Travelling *Slowly...*

*'Slow tourism is an alternative tourism choice in contrast to mass tourism. It is a part of the sustainable tourism family, different from mainstream tourism and emphasizing the tourist's greater personal awareness. It is characterized by reducing mobility and by taking time to explore local history and culture, while supporting the environment.'*

Wikipedia

In 1986, Italian journalist Carlo Petrini and a group of activists in Rome took it upon themselves to try to resist the opening of the biggest McDonald's in the world, with a seating capacity for 450 people, at the foot of the Spanish Steps. The protestors aim was to defend regional traditions, good food, gastronomic pleasure and a slow pace of life. The group was just one of many protesting, but instead of entering into dispute and argument, Petrini took an unusual approach – he handed out plates of penne to the protesters. McDonald's prevailed and is still there today, but the protests in the Piazza de Spagna led to the birth of Agricola, becoming known as the International Slow Food movement in 1989, later inspiring the Cittaslow movement, from which the idea of slow tourism was born.

Slow tourism is defined as much by personal choice as by the generic, semi-official interpretation of what it should be; slow transportation, slow places and slow food. In general it is considered 'slow' when tourists willingly slow down their pace in the interest of the environment and authentic experiences, to appreciate the particular characteristics of a place while respecting the locality and its inhabitants, and to do so without falling into nostalgia for the past or into commercial kitsch. Diehards consider that the activity component in any kind of slow tourism is more 'knowledge and learning based' rather than 'fun based', whereby slow tourism may also offer an intellectual experience because visitors can actively rethink modern life. But why should the 'intellectual experience' not also be fun, and can we not just take pleasure from the slowness without

having to think we have to be ticking off a list of experiences to prove that we are indeed a 'slow tourist'? In her article, *Slow Food's Elitism Only Fueled My Craving for McDonald's*, Suzanne Zuppello makes the comment, "Slow Food and its brethren are built on a tower of judgement so high that it's taken me more than eight years to climb down and confess that I love McDonald's, all of it — its flavor, price, and speed." In the same way, espousers of slow tourism could be seen as an authoritarian bunch who claim, contrast-

ingly, that 'slow tourism motivations include relaxation, self-reflection, escape, engagement, and discovery. People engage in slow trips to seek novelty experience through new temporalities, new places, and new people, that offer them sensations of thrills, adventures, and emotional stimulation.' Sensations of thrills, adventures and emotional stimulation don't bring the idea of slow tourism readily to mind.

The simple fact is that give something a name and there will be a group of 'intellectuals' who will start laying down rules and regulations to dictate

what that something should be. Anyone who has visited Kasbah du Toubkal will know that slow tourism is exactly what the Berber hospitality centre has been offering since it opened its doors twenty-five years ago. Good food accessed locally, involvement with the villages and communities of the High Atlas Mountains, treks of all levels through the beautiful Toubkal Natural Park, concern and consideration for the ecology and conservation of the rural region and much, much more, all done simply with the idea of being good neighbours, long before the term 'slow tourism' was ever even thought of.



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المنتزه الوطني لتوبقال

Parc national de Toubkal

## Toubkal National Park A slow travel case study

Created in 1942, the Parc National de Toubkal (PNTb), the first national park in Morocco, extends over the central part of the High Atlas, between the valley of N'Fiss in the west and that of Ourika in the east. With about 40,000 visitors per year, Toubkal National Park is the premier site for mountain tourism in Morocco. The presence of a network of mule tracks and organized networks of tourist guides (guides, muleteers, and porters) facilitates the access of visitors to the various points of interest at the site. The protection of the mouflon, an emblematic sub-species of sheep, of which only a few hundred individuals remain, is one of the main missions of the park.

The Toubkal National Park Ecomuseum project started in 1999 but officially opened its doors to the public on 9 July 2012. As a museum of the Toubkal National Park, it represents a showcase of this protected area, it allows an interpretation of the PNTb and its region; it is also an excellent tool for environmental education and communication of the strategy of the High Commission for Water and Forests and the fight against desertification concerning the management of protected areas in Morocco.

The most important objective of the department responsible for the creation of the museum is to encourage and promote the development of sustainable tourism in Morocco's protected areas, particularly in Toubkal National Park. Morocco as a country abounds in real environments and spaces for the evolution of sustainable tourism and is a real approach for better development to offer sustainable tourist products of quality. Winner of the Morocco Sustainable Territory trophy in 2016, presented by the Moroccan Ministry of Tourism, the idea of the Ecomuseum, the only known eco-museum in Morocco, is a real process for a better representation of the Park itself and the protected



areas. As a mountain park, Toubkal National Park stands out for its original characteristics: powerful relief, landscapes of exceptional beauty and remarkable biological diversity. Numerous rivers originate in the park area and provide irrigation in the valleys and plains of the foothills: the Nfiss, the Rherhaya, the Ourika, and the Souss. It protects the biodiversity and the beautiful landscapes offered by the highest mountain massifs of all North Africa, in the middle of which jbel Toubkal or Adrar N'Dern (the mountain of mountains) culminates at 4.167 m.

The cultural heritage, the picturesque natural landscapes and the wealth of flora and fauna, as well as the presence of the Lfni Lake at an altitude of 2,600 m, give Toubkal National Park great slow tourism potential. The main points or activities sought by visitors to the park site are: the Toubkal summit, the discovery of High Mountain landscapes, the Berber mountain culture and sports activities (hiking and climbing). This responsible tourism management has many advantages and strengths that can benefit the area in which it is practised:

An asset for local communities

Establish a sustainable income: direct job creation in protected areas, development of local crafts, restoration

Improves services: the creation of infrastructure (transport, education, health, wetc.)

Cultural affirmation of the inhabitants through the interest and respect is shown to them by visitors.

*Ikrane Selkani*

*University Institute of Scientific Research, Morocco*

## Toubkal National Park celebrates 80 years

Renowned for its wildlife and soaring landscapes, in 2020 Toubkal National Park celebrates its 80th anniversary. You can follow the Park on its Facebook page by clicking the logo.



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# A Natural High in the High Atlas



Have you ever felt you'd love to tackle Jbel Toubkal but not been sure of what you need or how to do it? In May this year, experienced Mountain Leader, Helen Menhinick, trekked North Africa's highest mountain, and through detailed lists and photographs, she takes you through everything you need to know and what you can expect from a trek organised by Alan Ward (an International Mountain Leader) in association with Kasbah du Toubkal. *(Find out more about Alan Ward courses at the Kasbah [HERE](#).)*



**YellowWood**  
Adventures

YellowWood Adventures Head of Operations, Cathy Thompson, loses herself in the beauty and tranquility of the High Atlas Mountains and Kasbah du Toubkal.

## Upcoming events at Kasbah du Toubkal



### Wilderness Medical Training

#### Morocco Mountain Medicine Expedition 2022

An exotic, educational and challenging trip that is packed with medical tuition and practical mountain skills training.  
26 September-2 October



### Invitation Only

#### Wellness, Yoga & Mindfulness Retreat

Yoga sessions, mindfulness workshops, guided walks activities in the most special and spectacular location.  
(Dates TBA.)



**ORBIS**  
EXPEDITIONS

### The Women's Partnership Challenge

Orbis Impact Expeditions heads to the High Atlas Mountains in Morocco on an incredible education focused adventure.  
11th-18th October 2022

### Do you have an idea for an event or training programme?

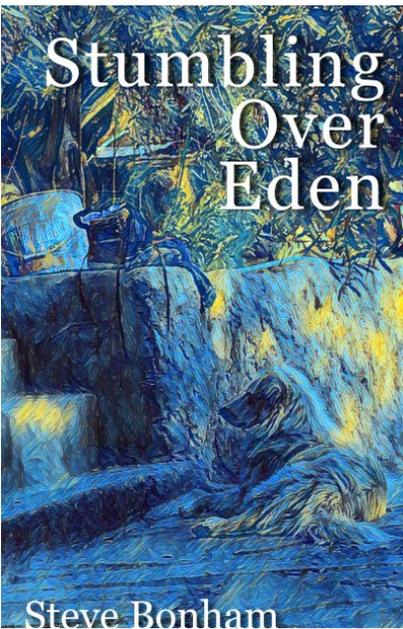
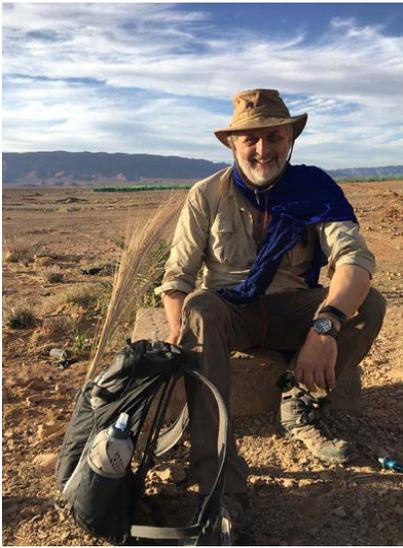
Kasbah du Toubkal has a wide range of spaces, facilities and equipment to suit most needs. For further information, please contact:

[bookings@discover.ltd.uk](mailto:bookings@discover.ltd.uk)/+44 (0)1883 744667



## Road to modernity: The untold Marrakesh

This story centres around the identity of Moroccans and their influence on the rest of the world. Filmmaker Basma Khalifa sheds light on the Morocco that isn't only about the tourism of the souks, Bazaars, old traditions, and food. She talks to some of the multi-generational creatives who are reshaping their lives and wanting to change the world's view of what it means to be a Moroccan today.



## Stumbling Over Eden

It started with a simple but probably crazy idea: to walk from the top of the Atlas Mountains into the Sahara Desert, a distance of 540 km. This is a tale of serendipity, exploration, self-discovery and freedom. My story involves the search for a lost tribe of dwarfs, discovering the lair of old warlords and an almost mythical Krupp cannon, travelling with a spirit dog and finding Eden. And much else. It is the tale of my adventure, small, without unnecessary heroics but definitely mine. I offer it to you as evidence that the possibility of such is within us all. I am no hardened warrior of the road. This is a tale for the adventurous at heart.

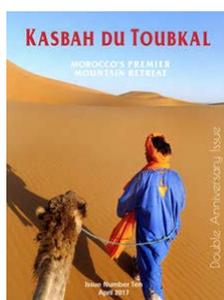


*Stumbling Over Eden* is available from **amazon**

or at Steve's website



If you would like to catch up with stories about the Kasbah, Marrakech and Morocco in general, click on the cover image to read over seven years of our magazines and newsletters.



Don't forget to visit our **website** and for further information contact

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