



Touristic guide

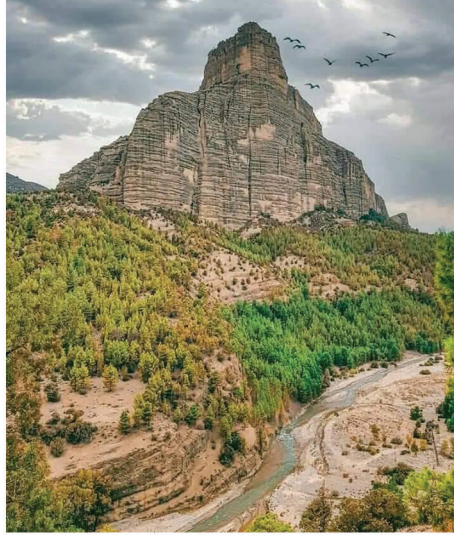
CATHEDRALE IMSFRANE

A UNIQUE BREATHTAKING PLACE

in the heart of the central High Atlas and the
reserve of Tamga Biosphere

EDITION 2023





CATHEDRALE IMSFRANE

Located within the Tamga Biosphere Reserve, near the villages of Tilouguit, Zawiat Ahançal, and the Ahançal River, the breathtaking natural site of Imsfrane resembles the silhouette of a cathedral. This geological formation reaches an elevation of 1872 meters with a 600-meter-long cliff. The magnificence of Imsfrane, coupled with the striking contrast of brown

rocks, green Aleppo pines, and red soil, presents a truly impressive spectacle. You can enjoy the panorama at the base of the cathedral or venture to the summit by climbing. Additionally, there are opportunities for rafting, hiking in the Tamga Reserve, and various other activities. The entire area is characterized by a rich cultural and spiritual heritage.

Situation



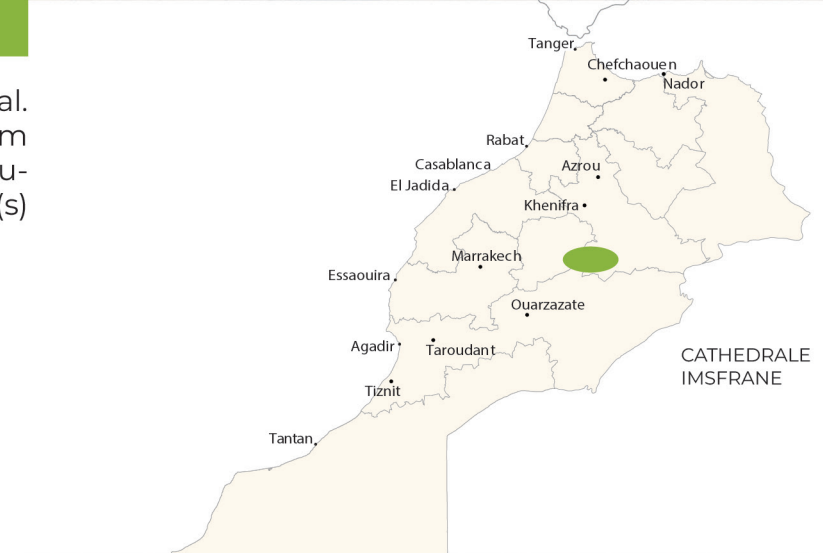
345 km from Casablanca via Beni-Mellal.
255 km from Marrakech via Azilal. 84 km from Azilal and the Geopark M'Goun museum via Bin El Ouidane. 69 kilometer(s) from Bin Al Ouidane.

The Cathedral is at:

- 15 km by track from Tilouguit
- 55 km from Agoudim and Amezray including 40 km by track
- 66 km from Taghia including 46 km of track and 5 km on foot
- 53 km by track from Anergui
- 111 km from Ait Bouguemez including 55 km of track

- Population : 9600 inhabitants
- Altitude : 1226 m
- Municipality : Tilouguit

Near the Cathedral Imsfrane, there are several villages waiting to be discovered and explored during your visits and hikes.



Attractions



SELECTION OF ATTRACTIONS

- Imsfrane Cathedral
- The villages of Tilouguit and Tamga
- The Assif-n-ou-Ahançal Gorges
- The Biosphere Reserve and the Site of Biological and Ecological Interest of Tamga
- The Ahançal-Melloul Ramsar site.
- The Kasbahs of Tamga
- Watermills
- The collective pastures of the Talmaste plateau
- Threshing areas

CLOSE TO THE VALLEY

- The valley of Zawiat Ahançal
- The Anergui valley
- The valley of Ait Bouguemez
- The M'Goun Geopark Museum in Azilal

A specific tourist guide is dedicated to the sites of Zawiat Ahançal and Ait Bouguemez.

See and discover



This list is not exhaustive, a multitude of sites, landscapes, traditions and curiosities remain to be discovered according to your interests and your desires once there.

TILOUGUIT

Tilouguit is a village of charm and character with its small Berber houses arranged on different levels of the slope. Tilouguit means bridge in Berber. The story goes that the name of the village comes from the bridge built by a couple living in a cave near the pastures to cross the river.





Nature or sports activities



- Hiking (Trekking)
- Hikes on the back of mules
- Rafting
- Mountain biking (MTB)
- Fishing
- Chase

*For sports enthusiasts
of all levels*

HIKES

Several hiking and mule trekking circuits are offered, varying in duration, difficulty levels, and distances. You can hike to the summit of the Cathedral on foot, walk along the edge or to the Assifn-ou-Ahançal gorges, for nature lovers or ecotourists you can hike in the Tamga biosphere reserve. You can also go hiking to join the nomads on the transhumance trails and discover the grazing and threshing areas. The favorable periods are summer, spring and autumn.



For more information on the activities, contact one of the tourist accommodations on the site.

RAFTING

The site is a dream destination for rafting practiced along the Assif n'ou Ahançal. You can go rafting for 2 hours, half a day or a day. The rafting season generally runs from March to May, depending on water levels, conditioned by rainfall, snow cover, temperatures and snowmelt. Activity accessible to all and to young people from 14 years old. Information on rafting available on the CRT: www.visitbenimellal.com.



MOUNTAIN BIKING (MTB)

Discover the site, its villages, its forests, its nomadic plateaus and high pastures by mountain bike, through the various circuits of medium difficulty of half a day or a day. Guides can accompany you, mountain bikes are available for rent. Contacts : Atlasaurus. Tour Cooperative +212668125717 or +212678177466.



Workshops And various activities

*Spend enjoyable
moments and learn
about local know-how*

GASTRONOMIC WORKSHOPS

Learn about local cuisine and prepare traditional dishes made with local products. This activity is suitable for adults as well as young children. Location: country lodges near Imsfrane.



ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES

The Ait Assam Ecotourism Cooperative aims to promote the biological heritage of the region. One can participate in the workshops and activities related to biodiversity that are being organized. Location: Village of Tamga. Contact:+212652498017.



*For more of information on these activities
contact a guide or one of the tourist
accommodations in the valley.*

Solidarity Activities



REFORESTATION IN THE SIBE OF TAMGA

Participate in biodiversity conservation actions on the Tamga site with the Tamazight association for development in charge of the rehabilitation of endangered plant species. Location : Tamga Village. Contact: +212662233090.



REFORESTATION WITH BREEDERS

You can plant your trees and take part in seasonal workshops for reforestation and rehabilitation of endangered species. Seasonal activity for adults and children. Location : Imsfrane. Contact: +212661313761.

*For supporters of solidarity
and sustainable development*

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

Several tree planting and waste collection awareness activities are organized each year to celebrate Earth Day in collaboration with local schools and associations. Contact: M'Goun Geopark Association : and Tamazirt Association for Development ATD. Contact :+2120641660572.



Participate in the tradition of Amazigh solidarity "Tiwizi"! If you are an amateur, do not hesitate to contact local associations, schools and cooperatives; to inform you about the solidarity projects planned. Solidarity stays can also be organized on request.

Historical Sites



KASBAH AGHBALOU N OUALOUZ



These beautiful houses of notables of the valley welcomed the pilgrims of the brotherhood. Contact one of the tourist accommodation providers for information on visits. Location : Village of Aghbalou n'Oualouz.

COLLECTIVE GRANARIES OF TAMGA



The founder of the Ait Issha dynasty built these collective granaries to store crops and seeds. A guided visit will allow you to understand the history of this territory and the life of the Ait-Mssad, Ait-Skhman and Ait-Hdido tribes. Location : Village of Tamga.

Dive into the history of Berber tribes

THRESHING AREAS



Traditional wheat and barley threshing floors are circular in shape. Threshing separates the seeds from the ears and stalks. Those sites are located near villages with strong agricultural activity such as the villages of Tamga, Aghbalou n'Oualouz and Tilouguit. Villagers help each others during this activity, an exemple of the existing strong social cohesion. Location: Village of Tamga.

WATER MILLS



Tamga's traditional watermill is still functional. Location : village of Tamga.

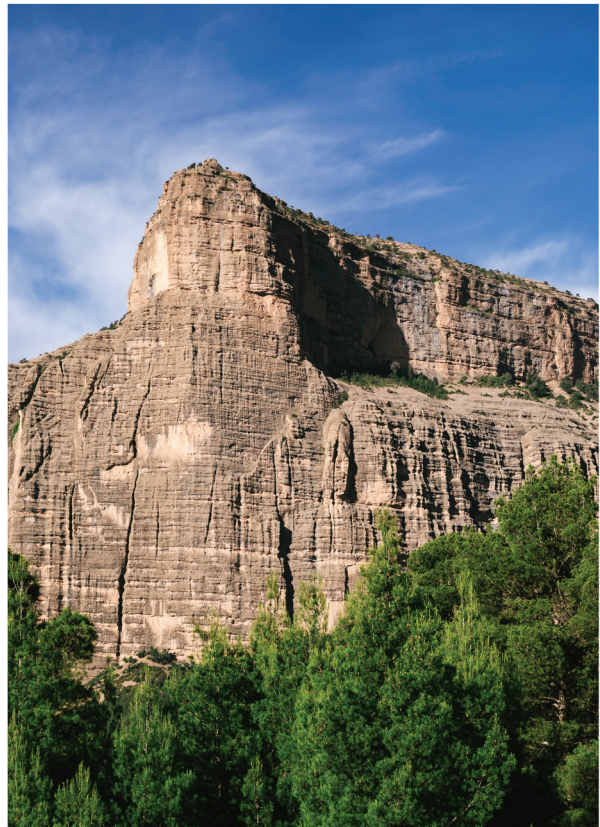
Geosites



*For the curious and
enthusiasts of dinosaurs and
geology.*

IMSFRANE

The Ismfrane rock geosite rises more than 300 m above the Assif n'ou Ahançal river. The sediments are formed by the accumulation of conglomerates and sandstones resulting from the erosion of the Atlas relief and their transport by ancient Miocene-Pliocene alluvium (between 2 and 10 million years ago). These deposits were then raised to their present altitude (Atlas orogeny) and sculpted by erosion into their present form.



CLIFF OF AIT ABDI

The limestone slabs with marl intercalations of the Toarcian-Aalenian Aguerd n Tazoult formation (180 million years old) are surmounted by a thick limestone bar (Ait Abdi formation) of the Aalenian-Bajocian (170 million years old) which displays tectonic structures with folds and reverse faults. The limestone slabs at the top of this cliff form the high karstic plateau to the west (altitude 3000 m), an area where the Ait Abdi tribe transhumance.



TALMEST ANTICLINAL RIDGE

The Jurassic series of the Talmest ridge exhibit a faulted anticlinal structure, prominently marked at its core by the intrusion of Triassic red clays (210 million years old) and Jurassic magmatic rocks. It is surrounded by alternating layers of increasingly younger carbonate and detrital formations, including the Lower Lias (190 million years old), Middle Lias (185 million years old), Upper Lias (180 million years old), Dogger (170 million years old), and finally the Miocene-Pliocene conglomerates and sands of the Cathédrale formation (10 to 2 million years old). The Aguerd N'Tazoult Mine, located on the southern flank of the ridge, is characterized by a Lead-Zinc mineralization of karstic type, hosted within the Middle Lias limestone.



Biological and Ecological Riches



SBEI TAMGA

Tamga SBEI is in the process of being registered as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. It is characterized by particular high-quality landscapes such as the site of "the Cathedral", numerous cliffs and escarpments which offer exceptional viewpoints, particularly in the southern half of the SBEI. The flora of this site is essentially composed of a very beautiful pine forest which can be associated with red juniper, thuya downwards and holm oak upwards with the presence of a typical Aleppo pine ecosystem. The faunal procession is very remarkable with a large number of endemic, rare and threatened species (77 species of birds, 17 species of mammals, etc.)

A Site of Biological and Ecological Interest is the term used for protected areas in Morocco. A SBEI is a remarkable ecosystem, with a high concentration of rare or threatened endemic plant and/or animal species, or with a high biodiversity index.

For nature lovers and ecotourism enthusiasts

THE RAMSAR SITE OF ASSIFS AHANÇAL-MELLOUL

This Ramsar site includes the Assif-n-ou-Ahançal and the Melloul River. It is one of the last remaining wild and nearly natural mountain river ecosystems in the Maghreb region. The site plays a significant role in the protection of at least two endemic or endangered species, namely the Atlas Barb (*Luciobarbus Ksibi*) and the Barbary Macaque (*Macaca Sylvanus*). The site also serves as a wintering ground for birds, including the Meadow Pipit (*Anthus Pratensis*). Besides its ecological value, these habitats offer landscapes of great rarity in North Africa. The local communities practice traditional management methods that contribute to the conservation of this wetland area.

A Ramsar Site is an internationally important wetland that meets a set of criteria, such as the presence of vulnerable species of fish and waterbirds. In Morocco there are 38 Ramsar Sites.

ICCA TILOUGUIT

The social community organization of Tilouguit is in the process of registering to obtain the status of ICCA* with the IUCN*. It is supported in this process by MBLA. The richness of the biodiversity of Assifn-ou-Ahançal and the Melloul wadi combined with the existence of cultural conservation practices in several interdependent areas (agriculture, pastoralism, cooperation, food, ceremonies and cultural practices, etc.); make it eligible for this status. If you want to learn more, ask your guides to introduce you to the existing practices in the area.

List of ICCAs in the province of Azilal

- ICCA Tilouguite
- ICCA Zawiat Ahançal
- ICCA Ait Bouguemez
- ICCA Ait Bou Oulli
- ICCA Ait Abbas
- ICCA Ait Blal
- ICCA Ait Mhamed



According to the IUCN, ICCAs are natural and/or modified ecosystems, bearing significant biodiversity values, ecological benefits and cultural values, voluntarily conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities, through customary law or any other effective means.

* ICCA : Indigenous and Community Conserved Area

* IUCN : International Union for Conservation of Nature

* MBLA : Moroccan Biodiversity & Livelihoods Association

Cooperatives



*Discover local products
and crafts*

During your stay, make sure to visit the cooperatives in the valley. There, you can purchase dried fruits, saffron, jams, honey, soap, aromatic and medicinal plants and local craft products.





Events

Do not miss

TILOUGUIT MOUSSEM

This 3 day Moussem (traditional festival) is organized by local associations. It welcomes the tribes of Zawiāt Ahançal and Ait Mhamed who present their songs and "Ahidouss" dances while the Tilouguit tribe present the Fantazia show. The third day is dedicated to celebrating group wedding ceremonies. Location: Tilouguit. Date: July.



ANNUAL PARTY TALOUSSI

Great annual ancestral festival organized before the opening of the pastures during which the wool of the sheep is shorn. The tribes meet near collective pastures. Each tribe presents its songs and dances while the women prepare various typical dishes such as corn and barley couscous and the men shear the sheep. This celebration takes place in a very festive atmosphere. Period: Between May and June. Duration: one day. Location: Tamga and Aghbalou n Oualouz.



ACCOMMODATIONS

Guest Houses

Gites

Camping

Information on accommodation is available on the CRT : www.visitbenimellal.com and on the Vaolo platform : www.vaolo.com.



DINING

Restaurant in Tilouguit and at the gites.



RINK COFFEE OR TEA

Coffees in Tilouguit and in the gites.



SOUK

Location: Tilouguit.

Day: Saturday.

Hours: 9 am to 5 pm.



GROCERY

Grocery stores at the location of the souk.



CLIMATE



Maximum temperature 37° (July-August), minimum 0° (December to February).

ROADS



The majority of the main roads are paved.

FUEL



Several gas stations in Azilal, Demnate and Ouaouizaght. Possibility of buying fuel in cans in the centre of the village of Tilouguit.

TRANSPORTATION



Public transport between Zawiat Ahançal and Ouaouizaght via the Cathedral and Tilouguit. Duration : 1h30 to 2h00.

DANGERS AND INCONVENIENCE



Very safe rural communities. In case of heavy rains in the mountains, some small risk of flooding. In winter the road can be cut off by snow for a few hours. Do not go into the mountains without a licensed guide who knows the area.

PHARMACIE ET URGENCES



Nearest pharmacies in Ouaouizaght. Public infirmary in Tilouguit.
Nearby hospitals in Azilal.

MONEY



Bank counters in Azilal, Demnate and Ouaouizaght. Most accommodations only accept cash. Possibility to pay with Euros in some accommodations. E-payment solutions are being implemented.

TELEPHONE AND INTERNET



All telephone operators have a network operating in the valley.

TOURIST GUIDES



List of approved guides on the CRT : www.visitbenimellal.com. Accommodations can put you in touch with licensed guides.

LANGUAGES



The predominant language in the region is Tamazight followed by dialectal Arabic. Most accommodation owners and all guides are fluent in at least French and English.

Here are some words in Tamazight to make your stay more pleasant :

Hello

Thanks

Please

Good night

Good morning

Salam

Tanmert

Irbi

Timnsioun

Sbahlkhir



Help us save the M'Goun Geopark

Let's preserve cultural heritage by supporting authentic experiences.

Let's respect the local culture and support communities by purchasing local products and by participating in solidarity activities.

Let's preserve our biological and ecological heritage.

Water is a limited resource. Let's reduce its consumption by using tap water and shower water wisely and reusing towels in our accommodation facilities.

Let's reduce our energy consumption in terms of air conditioning and electricity in the accommodation facilities.

Let's dispose of our waste in appropriate places to preserve the environment and the beauty of the valley.

THANK YOU FOR CONTRIBUTING TO SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT OF OUR M'GOUN GEOPARK!



M'GOUN UNESCO GEOPARK

The M'Goun UNESCO Geopark is the first Geopark in Morocco, Africa and the Arab world. This protected territory includes a large number of geosites of exceptional interest and many places of high ecological, archaeological, historical and cultural value. There are notably remarkable footprints of sauropod and theropod dinosaurs as well as numerous deposits of dinosaur bones.

Located in the Central High Atlas between Beni Mellal in the north and the crest line of Ighil M'Goun in the south, the M'Goun Geopark covers an area of approximately 5700 km² and includes 15 municipalities : Azilal; Demnate Tilouguite Zawiāt Ahançal Tabant Ait M'Hamed; Ait Taguella Agoudi N' Lkheir Ait Abbas; Ait Boulli; Ait Blal Sidi Boukhelf Tifni Anergui and Boutferda.

Contact: M'Goun Geopark Association, Azilal Morocco. www.geoparc-mgoun.ma.

The M'Goun Geopark authentic experiences

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Conseil Régional
du Tourisme
Beni Mellal Khénifra



African
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GÉOPARC M'GOUN

