



Touristic guide

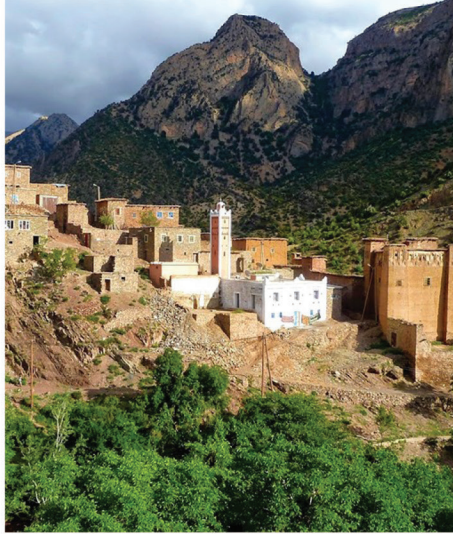
ZAWIAT AHANÇAL

A UNIQUE LAND

pastoral lands and natural stunning
beauty

EDITION 2023





ZAWIAT AHANÇAL

Located at the foot of the peaks, Zawiat Ahançal is one of the most emblematic sites of the central High Atlas. Abundant precipitations and winter snow support an intense and varied vegetation and provide to the L'Assif-nou-Ahançal a constant water flow throughout the year. Farmers have transformed the sloping grounds into beautiful terrace gardens. At the level of the trays and mountain ranges the

Ait Abdi and Ait Atta live by breeding. The site houses a cultural and religious heritage of great value that continues to convey historical, anthropological, and architectural messages. The natural environment of Zawiat Ahançal is ideal for a wide range of activities, from hiking to climbing, canyoning, rafting, kayaking, fishing, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in winter.

Situation



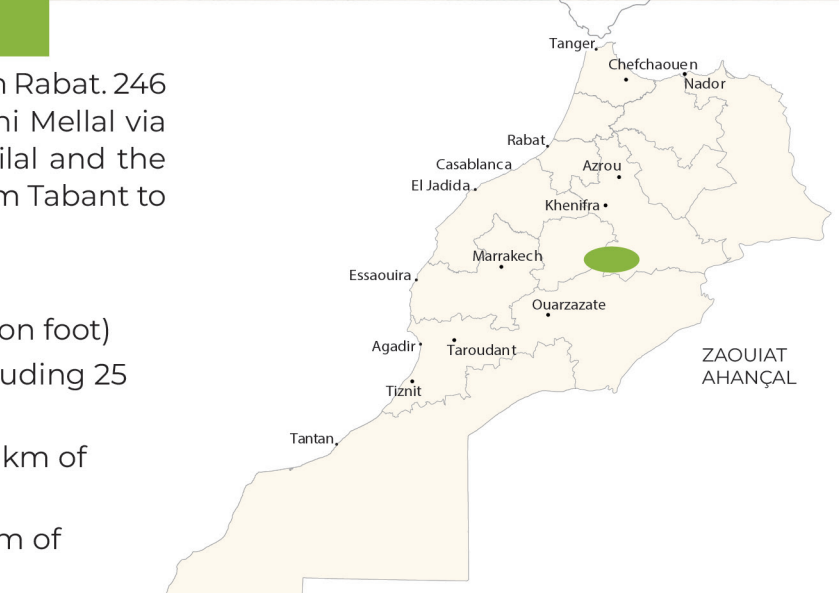
369 km from Casablanca. 467 km from Rabat. 246 km from Marrakesh. 162 km from Beni Mellal via Lake Bin El Ouidane. 82 km from Azilal and the Geopark M'Goun museum. 59 km from Tabant to Ait Bouguemez.

From the Agoudim center :

- 11 km from Taghia (6 km track, 5 km on foot)
- 40 km from Imsfrane Cathedral (including 25 km of track)
- 55 km from Tilouguite (including 40 km of track)
- 78 km from Anergui, (including 63 km of track)
- 150 km to go to Imilchil via the Cathedral of Imsfrane

- Population : 10000
- Altitude : 1600 m
- Municipality : Zawiat Ahançal

The valley has several villages to discover and explore during your visits.



Attractions



SELECTION OF ATTRACTIONS

- The Kasbah of Agoudim
- The collective granaries of the village of Amezray
- The collective granary of the village of Tighanimine on the road of Taghia
- The water mills of Amezray, Agoudim and Taghia
- The Taghia circus
- The Berber passage
- The high altitude sheepfolds
- Collective pastures
- The Ramsar site of Assif-n-ou-Ahançal and its sources

CLOSE TO THE VALLEY

- Imsefrane Cathedral
- Tiluguite
- Anergui
- Ait Bouguemez
- The M'Goun Geo Park Museum in Azilal

A specific tourist guide is dedicated to Ait Bouguemez and the Cathedral of Imsefrane and Tilouguite.

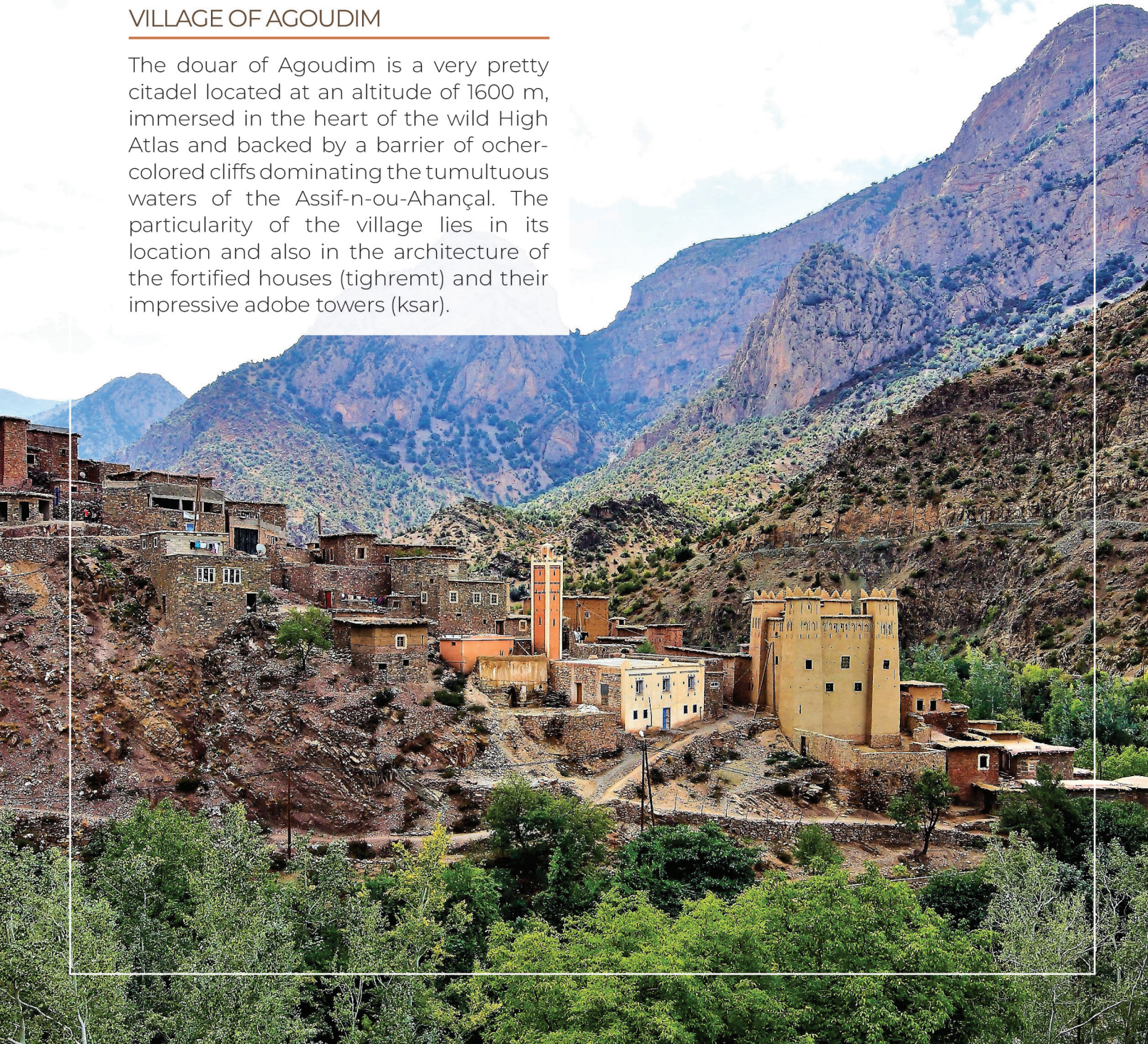
See and discover



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.

VILLAGE OF AGOUDIM

The douar of Agoudim is a very pretty citadel located at an altitude of 1600 m, immersed in the heart of the wild High Atlas and backed by a barrier of ochre-colored cliffs dominating the tumultuous waters of the Assif-n-ou-Ahançal. The particularity of the village lies in its location and also in the architecture of the fortified houses (tighremt) and their impressive adobe towers (ksar).



An aerial photograph of a deep canyon. The left side shows a steep, reddish-brown rock face. A river flows through the center of the canyon, surrounded by green vegetation and rocks. A text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

TAGHIA

Taghia, a high-altitude climbing destination in the valley, has gained worldwide recognition since the 2000s. The vertical cliffs of several hundred meters high are composed of quality rocks appreciated by professional climbers. Young less experienced climbers come here for their first climbing and for canyoning experiences. Several lodging and camping possibilities are offered in the area.

Nature or sports activities

- Hiking
- Mule or Donkey Rides
- Trekking (hiking with summit ascent)
- Climbing
- Via ferrata
- Canyoning
- Rafting
- Mountain biking (MTB)
- Fishing
- Nordic skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Marathon

*For sports enthusiasts
of all levels*



HIKING AND TREKKING

A wide variety of hiking trails, mule and trekking circuits are offered with different durations, difficulty levels, and distances. Among the most popular: hikes along the Assif-n-ou-Ahançal; ascent of the peaks of Issfoula (2600 meters), Timghazine (3173 meters), Aroudane (3358 meters); hiking the transhumance trails to reach the nomads; hikes for ecotourism enthusiasts in areas of high biodiversity.



Engage certified guides to accompany you and provide information about the existing hiking possibilities.

CLIMBING

Taghia, one of the most beautiful climbing sites in the world, is ideal for professionals and climbing enthusiasts. The climbing routes reach up to 500 meters in elevation. All styles of climbing are present, from technical slabs to steep walls and crack climbing. Several routes are equipped with climbing gear. The best period for climbing is from April to October. For more information, you can contact the Sports Association of the M'Goun Geopark.



A person wearing a red shirt, dark shorts, and a helmet is rappelling down a steep, reddish-brown rock face. The person is suspended by a rope and is looking down. The background shows a clear blue sky with some clouds.

VIA FERRATA

Test the new Ferrata route! Experience unique sensations and enjoy a marvelous view of the valley. Course for beginners, intermediate and experienced levels. Favorable periods: spring, summer, autumn. Location : Near the village of Agoudim.

A person wearing a blue wetsuit, a yellow helmet, and a black life jacket is rappelling down a rocky waterfall. The person is looking down and has their hands on the rope. The water is clear and greenish, and the rocks are dark and wet.

CANYONING

The valley's canyons and gorges offer superb canyoning descents! It's an activity suitable for families and friends as well as for those seeking a more sportive experience. Different courses for beginners or regular practitioners. One needs to be accompanied by a certified instructor. All equipment available on site. The best season is from July to October.

RAFTING

The valley is a fantastic destination for rafting practiced along the Assif-n-ou-Ahançal. There are several rafting circuits available, ranging from two hours to half a day or even multiple days. The rafting season is from March to May, depending on water levels. This activity is accessible to everyone, including children aged 14 and above. For additional information, you can visit the CRT : www.visitbenimellal.com.



MOUNTAIN BIKING (MTB)

Discover the valley, its villages, its forests by mountain bike! Several circuits are available, offering different durations and difficulty levels from easy to moderate. You can rent MTBs for your adventure. For inquiries and bookings, you can contact the Cooperative Atlasaurus Round +212668125717 or +212678177466.



If you are interested in fishing, ski touring or snowshoeing, please contact one of the tourist accommodations in the valley or visit the CRT : www.visitbenimellal.com



Workshops And various activities

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

COOKING WORKSHOP

Experience the local cuisine, prepare traditional dishes using local produce with a Berber family. Suitable for adults and children.



AGRICULTURAL WORKSHOP

Participate in agricultural activities based on ancestral techniques in the beautiful terraced gardens of the valley. For more information on these activities contact a guide or one of the tourist accommodations in the valley.



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WEAVING WORKSHOP

Learn the art of weaving and create your own carpet while enjoying a delightful exchange and sharing time with local women. Activity for adults and children. Location : Aroudan Cooperative in Agoudim. Contact : +212693275707.



AGROECOLOGY WORKSHOP

The Agoudim community nursery offers workshops on agroecology. Workshop themes include organic composting, valorization of biowaste, and more. Location : Center of the village of Agoudim. Contact : +212618126170 or +212770769786.



Solidarity Activities



AGROBIODIVERSITY

Agoudim Community Nursery promotes agrobiodiversity through the cultivation of endemic species, distribution of plants, training of farmers, and raising awareness among schoolchildren. Activities include participating in training sessions and engaging in various tasks at the greenhouse or experimental garden. +212618126170 or +212770769786.



*For supporters of solidarity
and sustainable development*

CELEBRATION OF THE EARTH DAY

Celebrate Earth Day with local schools and associations. Activities : tree planting and waste management awareness. Contact : M'Goun Geopark Association. www.geoparc-mgoun.ma.



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.



EROSION CONTROL

Participate in solidarity projects to fight against erosion with local associations, schools and cooperatives. Activities : construction of small anti-flood structures, tree planting, various activities with schools. Contact : +212676791235 or +212672868476.



RECYCLING

Contribute to the recovery of cardboard with the women of the Amagar cooperative. Activity : manufacture of heating briquettes from used cardboard. Contact : +212642888091.



PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL KNOW-HOW

Support the efforts to promote Berber carpets. Activities : To be defined based on the needs with the association. Location : Amezray Village. Contact : Association Amezray SMNID +212678962584.



Historical Sites



*Dive into the history
of Berber tribes*

GRENIERS OF AMEZRAY

These historic buildings constructed of earth and stone were used to store food and protect against raids by enemy tribes. Contact tourist accommodation providers.



THE ZAWIA OF SAINT SIDI SAID AHANÇAL

Zawiat Ahançal was founded by the Saint Sidi Said Ahançal in the 13th century in order to stabilize the region, highly disputed at the time because of the quality of its mountain pastures. The Saint founded the Tariqa Hansalia which had an important role in organizing the resistance during the advance of the French occupation. The visit to the mausoleum is reserved for Muslims. Location : Village of Agoudim.



THE KASBAH

These beautiful houses of notables in the valley also welcomed pilgrims from the brotherhood. Contact one of the tourist accommodation providers for information on visits. Location : Village of Agoudim.





Geosites

*For the curious and
enthusiasts of geology*



TAGHIA

The village of Taghia is dominated by an imposing rocky circus, at the center of which stands the Oujdad (2706 m), a monolith whose faces are walls several hundred meters high. Deep and narrow gorges cut into the Taghia circus (Tafraout gorges (Aqqa-n-Tafraout), Taghia gorges (Aqqa-n-Taghia), Tazaght canyon (Aqqa-n-Tazaght). These deep incisions lead upstream to a limestone plateau, a vast karstic area situated between 2500 and more than 3000 m in altitude. This is where the seepage waters are collected. Seepage water which resurfaces at the foot of the Taghia's cliffs at the contact between limestone and the impermeable Triassic clays, is the main source of the Assif-n-ou-Ahançal.



ZAWIAT AHANÇAL VALLEY

The valley nestles at the southern end of a vast basin at the bottom of which flows the Assif-n-ou-Ahançal river. It is surrounded by the chain of Jbel Aroudane – Jbel Timghazine to the south, Talmezt chain to the west and by the limestone walls of the high plateau of Ait Abdi to the east. Downstream, it narrows at the level of a rocky lock near Mastfrane (The Cathedral). The amplitude and width of this basin is due to the fact that it is carved out in a very thick, highly erosion-sensitive rock formation, consisting of a succession of alternating layers of clay, marl, sandstone, marl-limestone and limestone, more than a thousand meters thick.

Biological and Ecological Riches



SBEI OF TAMGA

The Tamga Site of Biological and Ecological Interest is in the process of being registered as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. It is characterised by unique, high-quality landscapes such as the "Cathedral" site and numerous cliffs and escarpments offering exceptional views, particularly in the southern half of the SBEI. The flora of this site is essentially made up of a very fine pine forest which can be associated with red juniper, thuja towards the bottom and holm oak towards the top with the presence of a typical Aleppo pine ecosystem. The fauna is remarkable, with a large number of endemic, rare and endangered species (77 bird species, 17 mammal species, 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

ASSETS RAMSA AHANÇAL- MELLOUL SITE

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 ZAWIAT AHANÇAL

The Zawiat Ahancal community social organization is in the process of obtaining ICCA* status with the IUCN* and inclusion in the World Database on Protected Areas. It is supported in this by the MBLA*. The rich biodiversity of the Assif-n-ou-Ahançal and Oued Melloul combined with the existence of cultural conservation practices in several interdependent fields (agriculture, pastoralism, cooperation, food, ceremonies, cultural practices, etc.) make it eligible for this status. To find out 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.





Event

Do not miss

TRANS ATLAS MARATHON

6 day marathon organized by the valley between Zawiāt Ahançal and Imilchil. Location : It starts from Zawiāt Ahançal and finishes in Imilchil. Date : August of each year. Contact : +212524846285.



ACCOMMODATIONS

Guest House

Gites

Camping

Accommodation information :

www.visitbenimellal.com

www.vaolo.com



DINING

Gites and guest house



DRINK COFFEE OR TEA

Cafe in the villages, lodges and guest houses.



SOUK

Location :Zawiat Ahançal - Asmessouk

Day : Monday - Tuesday

Hours : 9 am to 3 pm. - 9 am to 2 pm



GROCERY

Grocery stores at the location of the Agoudim souk and in Taghia.



CLIMATE



Maximum temperature 30° (July-August), minimum -7° (December to February).

ROADS



The majority of the main roads are paved.

CARBURANT



Gas stations in Azilal, Demnate and Ouaouizaght. Possibility to buy fuel in cans at Agoudim.

TRANSPORTATION



Large taxi between Azilal and Zawiat Ahançal. 2 hours drive for about 40 Dhs.

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.

PHARMACY AND EMERGENCIES



Pharmacy in Azilal and Tabant. Public infirmary in Agoudim. Nearby hospitals in Azilal and Demnate.

MONEY



Bank counters in Azilal or Demnate. Most accommodations only accept cash. Possibility to pay in 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

Timnsiouin

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 Ahañçal 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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Design Création Bleu



Conseil Régional
du Tourisme
Beni Mellal Khénifra



African
UNESCO Global
Geopark Network

منتزه جيوبارك مگون
+80+44 1780.0K | CX81
GÉOPARC M'GOUN

