

THE SIDE QUEST SOCIETY

A trip of a lifetime experiencing Mauritania's **Iron Ore Train** across the Sahara Desert

Remote. Dusty. Chaotic. Completely unforgettable.



£700

PER PERSON • 10 SPOTS ONLY

THIS IS NOT A HOLIDAY.

It is a Side Quest. Expect dust, delays, basic conditions, huge landscapes, questionable sleep, good people and a story you will probably tell for years.

THE SIDE QUEST SOCIETY • MAURITANIA

THE IRON ORE TRAIN

A Journey Like No Other

This isn't your typical trip. It's remote, raw, and completely off the beaten path. From the vast Sahara Desert to tiny desert towns, this journey challenges your body, patience, and sense of adventure.



EXPECT

- Dust storms and extreme temperature swings
- Long waits and unpredictable schedules
- Isolation in the middle of nowhere
- No comfort: no seats, no air conditioning, no official help

THE REWARD

- Ride the famous Mauritania Iron Ore Train, stretching roughly 2–2.5 km with iron ore carriages
- Witness huge Saharan landscapes, nomadic life and starry desert nights
- Experience a once-in-a-lifetime adventure few people ever attempt

PERFECT FOR

- Adventurers who thrive on challenge and unpredictability
- Travellers who value raw experiences over comfort
- Anyone looking for an extreme, unforgettable journey

THE GOLDEN RULE

Come curious, flexible and ready to laugh when the plan inevitably changes.

THE QUEST MAP

7 days on paper. Potentially 8 in real life.

The itinerary is flexible and may change depending on train movements, border crossings, transport and other logistical situations.

DAY 1	Dakhla	Arrival • Welcome dinner • Hotel
DAY 2	Dakhla → Nouadhibou	Transfer • Optional fish market • Prepare for train
DAY 3	Iron Ore Train → Choum	Overnight train • Choum guesthouse • Recovery
DAY 4	Choum → Nouadhibou	Prepare • Return train • Overnight onboard
DAY 5	Nouadhibou	Arrival • Shower • Rest • Celebration dinner
DAY 6	Nouadhibou → Dakhla	Border crossing • Desert transfer • Final dinner
DAY 7	Dakhla	Departure / continue your adventure

IMPORTANT: DO NOT BOOK A TIGHT RETURN FLIGHT

The train does not have a fixed timetable. We may stay an extra day in Choum or arrive later than expected. Keep Day 8 available as a buffer and do not book your onward flight for Day 7 or Day 8 unless you are comfortable with the risk.

African time works on its own terms. Build flexibility into your plans and you will enjoy the experience a lot more.

DAY 1

ARRIVAL IN DAKHLA

Day 1 is the arrival day in Dakhla, Morocco. We'll welcome everyone, check into the hotel and get the group together.

GETTING THERE

You can fly directly into Dakhla or take a bus from Agadir. Getting yourself to Dakhla in time for the start of the trip is your responsibility.

EVENING

We'll have a welcome dinner, get to know each other and go over the adventure ahead.

OVERNIGHT: Dakhla hotel

DAY 2**DAKHLA → NOUADHIBOU → TRAIN**

After breakfast we'll pack, check everything and get ready to cross into Mauritania.

OPTIONAL SIDE QUEST

Join a local visit to Nouadhibou's fishing port and see the vibrant maritime side of the city and its fishing industry.

THE TRAIN

Later we'll prepare to board the Mauritania Iron Ore Train. Departure is unpredictable and may fall anywhere between approximately 1:00pm and 6:00pm.

SIDE QUEST REALITY CHECK

Train times are estimates, not appointments. If the train decides it is having a lie-in, we wait.

OVERNIGHT: Train toward Choum

After the overnight ride, we expect to arrive in Choum sometime between approximately 1:00am and 8:00am.

RECOVER

We'll check into Auberge de Choum Guesthouse, a simple and safe place to sleep and recover. Breakfast and lunch are available.

OPTIONAL VIEWPOINT

If you're feeling human again, there's a small optional hike to a nearby viewpoint for a glimpse of Choum's desert landscape.

NEXT TRAIN

Later we'll prepare for the return journey. The train may depart anywhere between approximately 6:00pm and 11:00pm.

SIDE QUEST REALITY CHECK

Expect a very long day. Rest when you can. The Sahara is not interested in your Google Calendar.

OVERNIGHT: Auberge de Choum Guesthouse, then train

This is the second big train chapter: climbing back aboard and continuing the journey toward Nouadhibou.

ON THE TRAIN

We'll spend the journey watching the landscape change, dealing with dust and temperature swings, sharing snacks and trying to find whatever counts as a comfortable sleeping position.

THE EXPERIENCE

There are no reserved seats, no air conditioning and no guaranteed timetable. This is the real Side Quest.

OVERNIGHT: Overnight on the train toward Nouadhibou

Wake up to sunrise over the Sahara as the train makes its final approach. We expect to arrive in Nouadhibou between approximately 8:00am and 11:00am.

THE GLORIOUS SHOWER

We'll head to the hotel, check in, shower properly and let your nervous system remember what civilization feels like.

FREE TIME

The rest of the day is yours to relax, reset and explore Nouadhibou at an easy pace.

CELEBRATION DINNER

In the evening we'll regroup for dinner at Venezia Restaurant and celebrate completing one of the world's most adventurous train journeys.

OVERNIGHT: Nouadhibou hotel

After breakfast we'll leave Nouadhibou in the morning and begin the journey back toward Morocco.

THE BORDER

We'll cross the Mauritania–Morocco border late morning and continue toward Dakhla.

BACK TO COMFORT

Arrive in Dakhla in the afternoon, check into the hotel and settle back into civilization.

FINAL NIGHT

We'll have one last group dinner, swap stories and celebrate the ridiculous thing we just did.

OVERNIGHT: Dakhla hotel

DAY 7

DEPARTURE

The official group adventure ends here.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Depart Dakhla at your own pace or continue travelling independently.

BUFFER DAY

If logistics have shifted during the trip, this is where your extra flexibility may become important. Keep your schedule loose.

SIDE QUEST REALITY CHECK

Do not treat Day 7 as a guaranteed flight day. Keep your onward plans flexible.

SIDE QUEST REALITY CHECK

Read this before you book.

This trip is designed around a remote, local and unpredictable travel experience. That is the whole point — but it also means some things will not run like they do at home.

TIME IS A SUGGESTION

Meals, transfers and train departures can take longer than expected. A meal that is 'coming soon' may still require patience. The train can move on its own schedule. Border crossings can take time. Things may happen when they happen. Bring patience and a sense of humour.

THIS IS NOT A STARBUCKS EXPEDITION

Food in remote desert communities is naturally limited. Meals will be practical and local rather than café-style or highly customised. If you need a very specific diet, lots of food choices or guaranteed specialty meals, this trip may not be the right fit. Tell us about dietary requirements before booking so we can discuss what is realistically possible.

COME FOR THE EXPERIENCE, NOT THE COMFORT

You'll be trading polished infrastructure for stories, landscapes, people, dust, stars and a genuinely unusual adventure. If that sounds exciting rather than terrifying, welcome to the Side Quest.

PACKING LIST

Pack light. Pack smart. Pack like you don't mind getting dusty.

This journey is raw, remote and unforgettable, but it doesn't require heavy gear or overpacking. Your clothes and backpack will likely get dirty or damaged on the Iron Ore Train — do not bring anything you care about.

BUY LOCALLY — CHEAP TRAIN ESSENTIALS

- Scarf / turban
- Dust or snow mask for eye and face protection
- Snacks & plenty of water
- Power bank
- Toiletries / wet wipes
- Yoga mat for sleeping on the train
- Extra layers
- Sleeping bag for chilly nights

VALUABLES & STORAGE

If you have valuables you don't want to take on the train, they can be safely left in Nouadhibou with a trusted local contact. Previously, travellers have left laptops, expensive gear and excess luggage and retrieved everything after the journey.

PRO TIP

Bring a bag you are emotionally prepared to cover in Saharan iron-ore dust. Your future self will thank you.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

Your mission is surprisingly simple.

Get yourself to Dakhla on Day 1, bring the right documents, and show up ready for an adventure.

- Get your Mauritania e-visa before the trip. Apply at least 1–2 weeks before departure to allow time for approval.
- Get yourself to Dakhla, Morocco on Day 1.
- Bring your passport and required travel documents.
- Come prepared for discomfort, dust and extreme temperatures.
- Keep your onward flight plans flexible.
- Bring patience. Lots of it.

VISA

The Mauritania visa must be approved before entering Mauritania. We are happy to personally help and guide you through the application process.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Your £700 covers the core Side Quest experience.

INCLUDED	NOT INCLUDED
Accommodation in Dakhla & Mauritania	Flights to/from Dakhla
Meals in Choum, Nouadhibou & Dakhla	Mauritania visa fee
Snacks & water for the train journey	Travel insurance
Local guide on the Iron Ore Train	Personal expenses & souvenirs
Transport from Dakhla to Nouadhibou and back	Anything not specifically listed as included
Airport pickup & drop-off in Dakhla	
A small, like-minded group experience	

VISA FEE

The supplied trip information lists the Mauritania visa fee as €55, payable at the border in euros. Check the current official requirements before travel.

READY FOR YOUR

SIDE QUEST?

Mauritania isn't going to give you a polished holiday.

It's going to give you a story.



TRIP COST

£700 per person · 10 spots only

Small group. Big desert. Very little predictability.

THE SIDE QUEST SOCIETY

**Come for the train.
Stay for the story.**