

## Scarred4Life Sahara Rally July 2007



### Rally Requirements and General Points

- All rally crew to supply their own vehicles, preferably diesel (little petrol available below northern Morocco)
- It is suggested that all cars should be inexpensive, used 'jalopies', such as Peugeot 306, Fiats, Fords, even cheap 4-wheel drives. 2-wheel drive cars are, however, quite capable of making the journey.
- Servicing the vehicle prior to departure must be considered essential. Particular attention should be paid to cam belts, hoses, fan belts, batteries, filters, oil, water and tyres (2 spares at least should be carried).
- Large water containers are essential; temperatures reach 50 degrees in the desert, which is torturous on vehicles and crew alike.
- Luggage should be light. Tyres and suspension need protecting over rough tracks, sand and rock. Remember too that water and oil are heavy in their own right.
- Each car should have a maximum of three crew, since weight is an important issue. This may be exceeded if larger vehicles are used.
- Tents, sleeping bags, etc are required unless crew require more comfortable accommodation in local hotels en route.
- All maps and routes will be supplied by Karl of Scarred4Life.
- All vehicles are to meet at each specified stage prior to departure for the following leg. This is cover such issues as safety, any unforeseen changes to the route(s), but also to allow for socialising along the way.
- All costs relating to fuel, Channel and Tangier ferry crossings are to be met by the vehicle and crew. (Discounts on Euro Tunnel crossing are available; please ask Karl).
- Visas are free of charge and are available at each border control or on the ferries.
- European currency can be ordered in advance in the usual way; however Dirhams are only available in Morocco and cannot be taken out of the country. Similar rules apply in Western Sahara.
- Both Morocco and Western Sahara are Islamic countries; observance with regard to dress and customs is will occasionally be necessary.
- In the unlikely event of severe laws being broken, heavy fines and even imprisonment can result. Since there is no extradition treaty with Morocco, even the British Embassy can do little to help British citizens who find themselves in a Moroccan jail.

- There are many poor in Morocco. Taking a stock of pens, socks, old clothing, etc. and, of course, money to give away will be well received. Even a small amount of Dirhams makes a big difference. By Western standards Morocco is an inexpensive country in which to live.
- The consumption of alcohol on the streets is not permitted. (This does not apply to bars and restaurants).
- If there's space for golf clubs then there might be an opportunity for a game on the Royal Tanger course as part of the return journey.

### Further General Points

As mentioned above, vehicles should be inexpensive diesel 'jalopies'. This helps both to make the rally more accessible, cost effective and to recoup some of the costs through attainable sponsorship. Expensive vehicles might run the risk of damage since the route takes vehicles across mountains as well as through the desert. The 4,800 km of the round trip will encompass many kilometres on harsh tracks, rock and sand that might not be kind to an expensive vehicle.

Ideal vehicles might include Peugeot 205 or 306, Renault Clio, Citroens, Fiat Panda, Diahatsu fourtrack, old Land Rover etc. Such vehicles can be bought very cheaply from auctions, eBay, Autotrader etc. at a cost of up to £500. It is of course the engine and running gear that counts and not the bodywork or performance per se. Reliability and fun rather than speed marks out this rally.

In addition to a general service and good tyres some vehicles might require some under body protection, since the pistes are stonier than elsewhere. Sand tyres and sand ladders should not be necessary but if you wish and for security, allowing for space / weight, do bring them.

South of the Atlas Mountains temperatures will reach 50 degrees and, despite rumours and theory, could remain as high in the Sahara interior at night.

The heat adds stress to engines, tyres, water supplies and to crew. Plenty of water will be needed, so luggage should include a bare minimum of 'luxuries'.

Distances between fuel stops are not too great so jerricans should not be necessary. Fuel prices in Morocco are very cheap. In southern Morocco (Tan Tan through Western Sahara to Mauritania) fuel prices are discounted by 60-70% to prices in Tangier. Tangier prices are in turn approximately 60% of UK prices.

The Anti Atlas range is more spectacular than the pure desert pistes of the plains. 2-wheel drive vehicles will, though, be perfectly capable of negotiating the rough tracks. The Sahara interior will be more challenging than, say, the Atlantic coastal route.

The Western Sahara tracks should be followed closely since, off track, there are still minefields. These also follow the route of the Berm, a huge 2,000 km sand barrier that separates Morocco and Algeria. Local and inexpensive guides are available for slow convoys to cross safely. It is unlikely, though that such problems will be encountered. The Atlantic side of Western Sahara is under Moroccan control and is part of Morocco in effect, in all but name.

On the plateau, where Berber nomads and their tents will be seen, the wind can often produce localised sand storms. Vehicles, particularly paintwork, and crew will find such conditions quite harsh.

The nomads in Western Sahara are known as the Sahawis.