



B.10(b) CAMEL TREKKING

Peter Drake – Revised 2008

An exciting venture is the camel trekking expedition and the following notes aim to help expeditioners when on the trek. Trekking with camels is a great adventure, but if expeditioners are going to enjoy this experience safely there are certain procedures that must be followed at all times.

WORKING WITH THE CAMEL HANDLERS

Camels come with their own handlers. These will be men who have grown up in the bush working with camels. At times they may seem to be rather cruel to the animals but this is their way and expeditioners should not interfere. If one of the camel men asks for assistance, please follow instructions.

At overnight camp the camel men will make their own camp and will do their own cooking. Please respect their camp; expedition members should only go to it if the visit has been cleared by one of the leaders.

The people who live in these areas can go a long way and a long time without water but if it is readily available they can tend to waste it. Water carried on a trek is very precious, so if the locals ask for water always check carefully how much can be spared for issue to them.

NOTES ON HANDLING CAMELS

When you first meet up with the camels keep your distance and do not pet them. Camels bite and kick and get upset by strange people around them. On the first morning let the camel men do the loading but assist by carrying loads over to them. If you wish to help ask the camel men if you can, and what you should do.

The following are a few rules that should be followed:

- Do not be frightened
- Be firm but gentle.
- Do not beat camels unnecessarily and never beat them around the head.
- If a camel tries to misbehave, stand your ground and correct its behavior.
- Don't wave things around camels, they get upset and can bolt.

ON THE TREK

You will start most days at first light, so make sure you are ready to move when the camel loading is finished. It is very annoying if people are standing around waiting for someone to go to the toilet or to hold up the loading up because their kit is not packed.

Before leaving the campsite make sure that nothing has been left and especially make sure that there is no litter lying around.

All the articles which form this Expedition Webguide are written by able and experienced leaders of youth expeditions, but represent their own personal views and not necessarily those of the Board of Trustees of The Young Explorers' Trust. The points made represent suggestions for consideration rather than direct advice, and the responsibility for how these suggestions are used rests entirely with the users. No liability is accepted by the authors or by the Young Explorers' Trust for any loss or damage arising from the contents of these papers.



When walking with camels keep together but do not crowd the camels. Never go off alone or get separated from the camels unless under the direction of a leader. One leader must always be at the back and another at the front of the party and nobody should be behind or in front of these two people.

You will try to do as much as possible of the day's walk in the cool hours, so for the first hour and half or two hours you will walk without breaks if possible; but as it gets hotter you will stop for 5 minutes every hour. Try and go to the toilet and have drinks during this break.

Do not carry too much gear with you on the trek. All the gear you take with you should be able to be packed into a kit bag. You will also find that a small day sack will be useful to carry your camera, water and a small first aid kit during the day treks.

Dress for a trek is very much a matter of personal preference. Do not wear bright colors. You will find a pair of loose-fitting long trousers the best wear to protect your legs from thorn bushes and the like. A good wide-brimmed sun hat is essential and a shirt with long sleeves is also useful.

All ways keep visual contact with your camels and camel men, for they will know the route and it is very easy to get lost in bush country. Remember that your water supply, food, equipment and medical supplies will be with them! A short cut can very often turn out to be just the opposite!

MAKING AND BREAKING CAMP

If it is possible make camp up wind of where the camels will be spending the night, for they do smell.

When you arrive at the campsite you will probably be tired and hot, but if everybody helps in the unloading and the setting up of the camp everybody will get a drink and rest quicker than if only a few people are working.

Try to avoid making camp where there are obvious signs of cattle and other animals. The ground could be infested with ticks.

Before starting to set up camp check the area for such things as ants and snakes. If it is windy look for protection. Good shade is also important.

Clear as much of the ground bush and scrub from the camp area as possible.

Put all the jerry cans of water in the centre of the camp and check that none of them are damaged or leaking. No one other than the trek leader should take or authorize the taking of water.

Do not put the night camp in a lugger/wadi (dried up water course); rain many miles away can cause unexpected flash floods very quickly, causing great danger to anybody in them.

Dig a pit if possible for rubbish and a toilet pit. If this is not possible due to ground conditions mark out an area downwind for the toilet. All rubbish should be burnt before being disposed of in the pit.

Collect enough firewood to last the whole night. Collect the wood some distance from camp so if you have miscalculated there will be wood available near to camp. Be very careful when collecting wood that you do not pick it up before checking for snakes and scorpions; also be careful of thorns.

Get a fire going as soon as possible and get some water on for a drink. The fire must be kept going all night by those on watch.

All the articles which form this Expedition Webguide are written by able and experienced leaders of youth expeditions, but represent their own personal views and not necessarily those of the Board of Trustees of The Young Explorers' Trust. The points made represent suggestions for consideration rather than direct advice, and the responsibility for how these suggestions are used rests entirely with the users. No liability is accepted by the authors or by the Young Explorers' Trust for any loss or damage arising from the contents of these papers.



Choose the site of the fire with care and make sure it cannot spread to the surrounding bush.

You may be cooking on wood fires, so be careful of hot pan handles, for they can give you a badly burned hand if you try and pick them up without a glove.

Do not sleep too near to the fire as sparks from the fire can damage your sleeping bag and the smoke can be unpleasant.

A tidy camp is a safe camp: do not leave personal or group equipment lying around. If an emergency happens you will need to know where things are quickly.

A rota of watches should be kept through out the night with at least two people on duty. The watch's main duty is to alert the trek leader if they hear or see anything unusual, and to keep the fire going. They must remember that everybody else will be sleeping, so loud talking and walking about should be avoided. All leaders and members should take their turn on the rota. It has been found that watches of an hour's length are best, and for each pair on duty to move one hour each night (i.e. the 9 to 10 pm. pair will be the 10 to 11pm. pair the next night). The pair that undertakes the last watch will put the breakfast water onto boil so that when people get up they can have a hot drink.

In the evening before going to sleep pack all the kit you can and do such jobs as filling water bottles which you will not have time for in the morning.

Do not open out your sleeping bag until you intend getting into it. This will avoid anything making their home in it before you do! It is a good idea to check your sleeping area before turning in. Everybody should sleep within the camp perimeter.

Put your socks over the top of your boots to stop things getting into your boot during the night. Check your clothing before putting it on in the morning. It is best to use the clothes you intend to wear as a pillow to sleep on.

When all the camels have been loaded you must inspect the camp area to check that nothing has been left before setting off on the day trek.

LOADING THE CAMELS (see diagrams on the final page)

1. Fit head rope first (see diagram 1)
2. Couch the camel, to the command of TOO
3. Hobble if necessary, to prevent rising (see diagram 2)
4. Fit saddle (see diagrams 2, 3 & 4)

The load must be of equal weight on each side and tied up as high as possible on the saddle.

The load must not touch the camel's spine.

Try not to make any sudden movement or sounds around the animals when loading.

Always be alert to what the animal is doing. They do not like being loaded so they can attempt to bite or kick and both are extremely unpleasant.

Once you are on the trek check every now and again that the saddles on the camels and their

All the articles which form this Expedition Webguide are written by able and experienced leaders of youth expeditions, but represent their own personal views and not necessarily those of the Board of Trustees of The Young Explorers' Trust. The points made represent suggestions for consideration rather than direct advice, and the responsibility for how these suggestions are used rests entirely with the users. No liability is accepted by the authors or by the Young Explorers' Trust for any loss or damage arising from the contents of these papers.



loads are not loose or slipping, otherwise the camel may develop sores on their backs, or you may lose kit.

CAMEL FEEDING

Camels need at least six hours every day to browse. It is best to do the whole day's march in one go as loading and unloading takes time. Camp should be made around lunchtime to avoid walking in the heat of the day and giving the camels time to browse before they have to be brought in for the night.

Camels should not be couched during the march as this slows the pace down and causes them to become confused.

All the articles which form this Expedition Webguide are written by able and experienced leaders of youth expeditions, but represent their own personal views and not necessarily those of the Board of Trustees of The Young Explorers' Trust. The points made represent suggestions for consideration rather than direct advice, and the responsibility for how these suggestions are used rests entirely with the users. No liability is accepted by the authors or by the Young Explorers' Trust for any loss or damage arising from the contents of these papers.

This is Section B.10(b) of the YET Expedition webguide from: www.theyet.org



Diagram 1 - Fitting the Head Rope

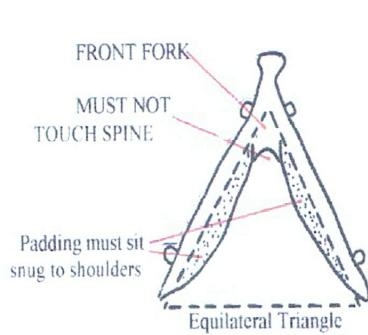


Diagram 3 - Saddle from the front

PADDING MUST SIT
ON TOP OF SHORT RIBS
between hump and rump

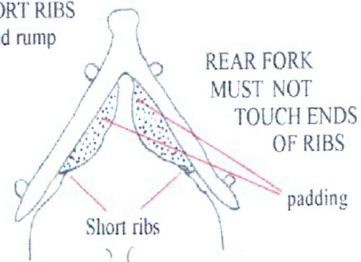


Diagram 3 - Saddle from the Rear

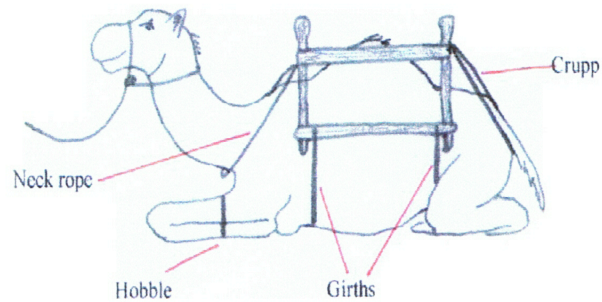


Diagram 4 - Couched Camel