

Summit Mount Kilimanjaro

Trek to the Roof of Africa following the Machame Route



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Mount Kilimanjaro Trek, Machame Route

Conquer the tallest freestanding volcano in the world

Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in Africa (5895m/19,340') and is situated on the northern Tanzanian border, the classic photograph being taken from Amboseli National Park in southern Kenya. The mountain is a designated national park and is administered from the Marangu Gate on the south side, and all expeditions are obliged to complete formalities before proceeding. The two principle peaks of the massif are Kibo, a volcanic crater, and the seldom visited and lower Mawenzi (5149m). The highest point on Kibo is known as Uhuru; Gillman's Point is a subsidiary blip on the rim at 5685m.

Kibo dominates the game-filled Kenya plains to the north and the fertile lands around Arusha in Tanzania to the south. You will ascend the mountain via the Machame Route which rises from the Tanzanian side of the mountain and is arguably the most spectacular and beautiful of all the routes on Kilimanjaro. The route is challenging but does not require any technical climbing and should be within the compass of any moderately fit person who has done sufficient training.

George Mallory coined the now legendary epithet 'because it's there' as the reason for attempting Everest. For Kilimanjaro read 'because you can'!



Detailed itinerary

Day 1: Depart London to Nairobi

Day 2: Nairobi to Arusha

Arrive Nairobi and join connecting flight to Kilimanjaro airport. Upon arrival transfer to hotel where we will meet our guides, have our trek briefing and prepare for the challenge ahead.

Day 3: Machame Gate to Machame Camp 6-7hrs (3000m)

After an early breakfast at the hotel, we are transferred to Machame Gate on the south side of Kilimanjaro. On arrival we will meet our porters, complete park formalities and have a picnic lunch before beginning the ascent.

The first day's trek takes us gradually up across the forested lower slopes of the mountain to a ridge between two streams, then on a little more steeply to the first night's campsite which lies just above the forest line at an altitude of 3,000 metres.

Day 4: Machame Camp to Shira Camp 6-7hrs (3850m)

From Machame Camp, the route continues on up through the forest until we reach the steep ascent onto the Shira Plateau, where there are rewarding views of the mountain.

Day 4 – cont.

Looking back, you will be able to see Mt Meru rising high above Arusha town in the distance. The path follows a steep moorland ridge north directly towards Kibo.

Day 5: Shira Camp to Barranco Hut 7-8hrs (3950m)

Walking now on high moorland, the landscape changes the entire character of the trek. We traverse the southwest side of Kilimanjaro, passing underneath the Lava Tower and the final section of the Western Breach and finally reach camp. The altitude is getting high now as we reach up to 4600m before descending – following the 'walk high, sleep low' code to aid our acclimatization to altitude.

Day 6: Barranco Camp to Karanga Camp 5hrs (3963m)

Today we start by descending into the start of the Great Barranco, a huge ravine. We then exit steeply, up the Great Barranco Wall, which divides us from the southeastern slopes of Kibo. It's a climb over rock, not technical but long and tiring. Passing underneath the Heim and Kersten glaciers, we head towards the Karanga valley. From here we have a steep climb up from Karanga valley to our night's camp at Karanga camp. For those feeling strong we will go for a mid-afternoon acclimatization trek up to around 4200m before descending back to camp for the night.

Day 7: Karanga Camp to Barafu Camp 3-4hrs (4640m)

After a good night's rest and breakfast, we set off on our walk to Barafu camp at 4640m. The climb will take us across desolate scree slopes with no vegetation around us at all. It's a tough steep walk made more difficult by the altitude. On arriving at camp we eat and spend the afternoon resting as we prepare for a long night and day ahead. It is important to keep hydrated and warm. We have an early dinner and then try to get some sleep as we will be getting up at between 11pm and 12pm to start the climb to the summit.

Day 8: Summit day, 12-16hrs

This is an extremely long and challenging day, walking up to 16 hrs. Rise shortly after midnight and climb steeply for about seven hours over scree and rock towards the Rebmann Glacier and Stella Point on the rim of the crater. The early departure is designed to give us the maximum chance of reaching Stella Point to watch the dawn break over Africa. At Stella Point we join the final leg of the main route from Kibo Hut, and it is a further hour or two around the rim of the crater to Uhuru Peak at 5895 metres.

Detailed itinerary

Day 8 cont.

On a clear day, the views across the plains of Kenya and Tanzania are fitting reward for what will have been a genuine test of your physical and mental endurance!

We descend to Barafu for lunch and a quick rest before heading down to Millennium Camp at 3790 metres.

Day 9: Millenium Camp to Mweka Gate 4-5hrs (1630m)

After the exertions of the day before, many find the last day quite tiring, but the trek down through the cloud forest that cloaks the lower slopes of Kilimanjaro is very beautiful and we could get to see a troop or two of the wonderful Colobus monkeys. There will be a short wait at Mweka to wind up park formalities. We then continue by vehicle to our hotel, and a well-earned celebration dinner.

Day 10: Depart Kilimanjaro for London

Transfer to Kilimanjaro airport for afternoon flight to London*.

Day 11: Arrive London, UK

* NB: flight times depend on the airline.

Grade

Tough

Best time of year

June to October

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This itinerary is complex and subject to change

