



Kilimanjaro Lemosho Route and Kibo North Circuit Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 – Depart mid-evening from London Heathrow on an overnight flight to Kilimanjaro International Airport.

Day 2 – Arrive at Kilimanjaro airport around breakfast time (subject to which airline used). An East African Adventure representative/trip leader will be there to meet you and help with your baggage and transfer to Ilboru Safari Lodge (generally) on the outskirts of Arusha on the lower-most slopes of Mt Meru. This lodge is about an hour's drive from the airport and is comfortably appointed with characterful private thatched rooms set in large gardens of many colourful flowers and plants.

Day 3 – We set off after breakfast to drive to the Londorosi gate to enter the Kilimanjaro National Park on the west side of the mountain. This takes about 2-2.5 hours, our route travelling between Mt Meru and Kilimanjaro giving us good views of both. We travel through many communities and smallholdings (shambas), which for a first time visitor to Africa can be a very special experience. We drive up through the fertile, cultivated lowest slopes of Kilimanjaro, into tree plantations to arrive at the Londorosi Park Gate (at 2250m) on the edge of the Montane Forest. Once we have registered and paid the National Park fees we make our way to the start of the Lemosho Route onto the Shira Plateau. It is roughly a three to four hour walk through the forest to our camp for the night at Mti Mkubwa (Big Tree) campsite, by a large 'Poddo Coccus' hardwood tree, at 2700m.



Day 4 – Waking to the peace of the forest on our first full day on Kilimanjaro, we aim to leave camp around 8am. We continue on the Lemosho route through the forest for about 1.5 hours before it starts to get thinner as the trees become stunted and sparse, with large heathers and shrubs taking over as we are leaving the lower forested zone and entering the moorland zone. We are walking onto the Shira Plateau and should reach the edge of it after another hour, the line of hills on our right are the Shira Ridge, which is in fact the crater rim of the Shira Caldera, Kilimanjaro's oldest volcano.

Shira was the first eruption of Kilimanjaro, followed on the other side by Mawenzi (which we will have great views of on day 7), Kibo was the last eruption and 'pushed up' higher than the others, filling the Shira Caldera in the process, and creating the Shira Plateau, now a large area of moorland.

After 6 - 7 hours trekking today, we are camping on the plateau tonight at Shira One campsite, which at 3500m is a really good gradual acclimatisation to the start of the trek. Cloud often builds during the day, but as the sun goes down and the temperature drops it disperses, giving us our first (great!) views of Kibo during the night and next morning.

Day 5 – Breakfast is enjoyed with views over the Shira Plateau to Kibo, and the nearby Shira Ridge. Today's walk takes 7-9 hours and takes us through heather moorland with volcanic rock becoming more obvious. One of the plants that we see today is the Giant Lobelia; these large flowering shrubs rely on the special conditions found at this altitude and thrive where other plants cannot survive, growing to over 3 metres tall.



We walk close to the Shira Ridge this morning and see the Lava formations of the Shira Cathedral, and Shira Needle, generally stopping for lunch around Shira Hut (3850m) on the Shira Route. After the gradual incline throughout the morning, we are getting closer to Kibo now and can see the detail of the cliffs and glaciers on its West Face.

After a lunch-break enjoying views of Kibo and Mt Meru, we make our way through barren moorland that becomes little more than clumps of grasses and small heathers amongst the covering of volcanic rock. Following this morning's trekking with views of the craggy, glacier covered West Face including the Western Breach, we now start our traverse of Kibo via the quiet and little used Kibo North Circuit route. This gives us a real feel for the mountain and visits a side few people see, showing the immense size of Kilimanjaro and its three peaks like no other route. After 2-3 hours we turn off the Shira route onto the North Circuit and towards Moir Hut for tonight's camp, which is a further 2 hours and takes us to around 4250 metres.



Day 6 – Starting today's trek soon after breakfast we pass round and under the Lent Group. We climb to around 4500 metres - 4600 metres, before dropping back to stay around 4300 metres, a good height to continue acclimatising. We trek around Kibo on the low northern slopes with the Northern Icefields above us, and the source of the Kamwanga and Msanga river tributaries below. Walking for 4-5 hours today it is unlikely we will see any other trekkers, making us feel as if we have the mountain to ourselves whilst enjoying the seldom seen views on this side of Kibo. We are in a barren Alpine Desert at this height, with clear views for miles into Kenya, can see how high we actually are above the plains and forest below, the border with Kenya, and Kibo above. Camp for tonight is Pofu camp at around 4200 metres, a special camp below Kibo unlike the other more used, busier campsites on the mountain.

Day 7 – Our trek today gives another good day for acclimatisation and takes around 4-5 hours. We can enjoy another quiet day of barren wilderness as we make our way across to tonight's camp at Third Camp, which is at 3900 metres, and is our closest point to the Kenya border. We have wonderful views to the southeast to Mawenzi as we gradually get closer to it the nearer to camp we get.

Mawenzi is a very striking and picturesque mountain on the eastern side of Kilimanjaro. Mawenzi is the second peak of Kilimanjaro and the top, Hans Meyer Peak, reaches 5149 metres. The peak is an impressive sight of jagged rock spires and ridges that have been formed by erosion of the volcanic rock over thousands of years.

Day 8 – Camping on this side of Kili we enjoy the warmth of the sun as soon as it rises and can have breakfast whilst gazing down onto swathes of alpine moorland, over the northern forests and across the border into the plains of southern Kenya and the national parks of Amboseli to the northwest and Tsavo to the east.

After today we are joining some of the main routes up and down the mountain so the solitude must be enjoyed, with the excellent views of Mawenzi and the Saddle (seen from an unusual side) being the main focus as we walk south. The path turns and starts to climb after about 2-3 hours, and we should reach camp at School Hut in the early afternoon. We have begun the ascent of Kibo and after 4-5 hours walking today are now at a height of 4750 metres. When we arrive in camp we have time to rest and sort our gear for the final summit climb the next day. We have an early dinner to give us as much time in bed as we can because of the 'alpine' (early!) start for the summit the next day.

Day 9 – Waking around midnight we then leave for the summit at about 1 am with head torches and join the path from Kibo Hut to zig-zag through volcanic scree to Gilmans Point. We aim to reach Gilmans Point in time to see the sunrise over Africa, and from here one can see the curvature of the earth. Most of the ascent is behind us now and from Gilmans Point the summit, Uhuru Peak, takes 1-2 hours and is another 200 metres of ascent around the



crater rim giving us views of the glaciers and vents inside as we make our way to the top. Arriving at the highest point in Africa at 5895m we can take in the views of Mt Meru and appreciate the route we have taken to get here laid out below. From starting a week before on the lower western slopes, passing the Shira ridge before crossing the expansive plateau towards the Western Breach, then circumnavigating Kibo to the Saddle and Mawenzi we have really seen all of this famous mountain.

After celebrating and taking photos we leave the summit and reach Stella Point to start our descent to Barafu Hut where we will have some food before making our way down to Mweka Hut at 3100m on the Mweka Route. The solitude we have experienced will be brought plainly to our attention as we join the Mweka route, one of the principal descent routes off the mountain, and approach Barafu Hut, one of the busiest campsites on Kilimanjaro. This is a long and demanding day with over 1100 metres of ascent, 2700 metres descent and a total walking time of 12-16 hours, but it is well worth it for the satisfaction, achievement and experience of reaching the world's highest free-standing mountain and one of the seven continental summits. With this route you have not just 'done' Kilimanjaro but seen and experienced its many different sides and are left with a greater knowledge and respect for the mountain.

Day 10 – Large heathers and fig trees surround the campsite as we are on the lower edge of the moorland once more and we wake to the sounds of the forest. There is 3-4 hours trekking left now on good paths through rainforest down to the National Park gate at Mweka, and we will have tired legs but may see wildlife in the rainforest once more. Spending time in the rainforest and spotting wildlife reminds us how diverse Kilimanjaro is and that we have seen so much of it this past week, descending and spotting monkeys in the canopy above is a great end to the adventure. At Mweka gate we receive certificates for our achievement and have some food before transferring to Moshi and spending the night at the Impala Hotel (generally) for very welcome showers and a drink over dinner that evening.

Day 11 – A leisurely breakfast at the hotel, followed by relaxing for most of the day until transferring to Kilimanjaro airport in the afternoon for an overnight flight home.

Day 12 – Arrive at Heathrow mid-morning.

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