



Kilimanjaro Machame Route

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 is there to help with our baggage and transfer to the Impala Hotel (generally) in Moshi, less than an hour's drive from the airport. This hotel has been chosen for its comfort and well appointed accommodation allowing us to relax and look forward to the adventure ahead after a long day travelling.

Day 3 – Today we leave after breakfast and drive to the Machame park gate, which takes us up into the lower cultivated slopes that are home to many small communities including the indigenous Chagga tribe. Bananas, vegetables and coffee are grown on these fertile slopes. After 1-2 hours we arrive at the park gate (1800 metres), which is a hive of activity as porters' loads are organised, and registration and park fees are finalised



before we can start our trek up onto Kilimanjaro through the rainforest. The trek to camp is 6 - 8 hours, mainly through the forest where we can look out for colobus and blue monkeys amongst the vines and trees. The forest is carpeted with flowers, ferns and begonias whilst mosses and lichens grow on the trees in the humid air deep in the forest. Trekking up a ridge between streams gives us views deeper into the forest and the chance to see leopard, which are known to live here, but are very rarely seen. We come out of the forest at around 3000 metres to pass into heather moorland and soon reach our camp at Machame Huts.

Day 4 – During today's trek we have excellent views of Kibo straight ahead and Mt Meru to the west as we walk through heather moorland to reach Shira Hut and our campsite for tonight at 3850 metres. The rainforest has turned to heather moorland as a result of the higher altitude and different climate found here which stunts the growth of other plant species found lower. Large heather and grasses thrive and cover the ground whilst fig



trees draped with usnea (old mans beard) are about the only trees now. We can also see Giant Lobelia today that are only found in this low alpine moorland, these large flowering shrubs growing to over 3 metres tall. It is a 6-8 hour trek today that takes us onto the Shira Plateau with views of the Shira Ridge, Cathedral and Needle, the latter two are impressive lava formations not far from camp.

Day 5 – From Shira Hut we head straight for Kibo and as we get closer can make out much of the detail of its craggy west face glaciers and cliffs, including the Western Breach. Today is a good acclimatisation day as we make our way to around 4500 metres and pass near the Lava Tower formation before traversing Kibo to tonight's camp at Barranco Hut (3950 metres). This walk takes between 6-8 hours and can be tiring but Barranco (Swahili for gorge) Hut is one of the most dramatic camps on Kilimanjaro, situated near Great Barranco and with excellent views down to the forest and plains below.

Day 6 – It is an earlier start today but once the sun has climbed high enough to shine onto camp it warms up quickly and we can change from warm clothes to T-shirts in minutes. We leave camp to cross Great Barranco and it is a steep pull out of the gorge but from there it is fairly level walking along the Kibo South Circuit. We trek today with views of the Southern Icefields above us as we make our way to Karanga camp, near the Karanga valley, walking for a total of 3-4 hours. This extra day spent on the mountain at around 4200 metres altitude together with a short walking time really helps the acclimatisation process and splits into two what is otherwise a long day to the next camp at Barafu Hut.

Day 7 – Leaving Karanga camp after breakfast, we stay on the Kibo South Circuit path until it crosses the Mweka route, at which point we turn north and climb to Barafu Hut at 4600 metres. It is roughly 5 hours walking today and we hope to reach camp early to mid- afternoon, allowing us time to sort our gear for the summit and get some rest before an early dinner. We get to bed as soon as we can for the very early start for the summit, when we will be pleased to have had the last two days at a good altitude to adjust, and shorter walking times to rest before summit day.



Day 8 – Waking up around midnight we aim to leave for the summit between 1-2 am. The path to Stella Point on the crater rim of Kibo is a steep scree zig-zag route and we use head torches to light our way until the coming sunrise brings some welcome warmth in the early morning. We will be near Stella Point as it rises and have wonderful silhouettes of Mawenzi and views of Africa below us. Now on the crater rim we can see inside it to the vents and glaciers as we climb the final 100 metres (1 hour) to the summit, Uhuru Peak, at 5895m. From the top we have a 360 degree panorama that includes Mt Meru, Mawenzi, southern Kenya, glaciers and new friends as we celebrate our success and take photos. It is soon time to re-trace our steps to Stella Point and Barafu Camp for some food as we make our way from there down to Mweka Hut at 3100 metres and our last night spent in tents. This is a long, tough day with over 1200 metres of ascent, 2700 metres descent and 14-17 hours walking, but it is worth it for the satisfaction, achievement and experience of reaching the summit of the world's highest freestanding mountain and one of the seven continental summits.

Day 9 – 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. Reflecting on the trek with new friends and spotting monkeys in the canopy above us makes this an enjoyable 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 10 - 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 11 – Arrive at Heathrow Airport mid-morning.

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