



Kilimanjaro Rongai 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 will be there to meet you and help with your baggage and transfer (generally) to the Impala Hotel, Moshi, which is ideally situated less than an hour's drive from the airport, where you will be glad to relax in its comfortable surroundings after a long day travelling.

Day 3 – On this the first day of the trek we leave our hotel after breakfast, at around 8.30 and drive via the small town of Marangu up onto the lower slopes of the mountain. We travel into the forests and cultivated lands that are home to various small communities including the indigenous Chagga tribe which has its roots on this side of Kilimanjaro. The drive takes around 4 hours and can be dusty but offers a great insight into local culture



and way of life. We arrive at the Rongai park gate in time to meet the porters whilst they sort loads, and pick up our packed lunches. From here we start trekking up through the forests where colobus and blue monkeys, large hanging vines, mosses and exotic plants give you constant reminders this is more jungle than forest! Lunch is taken at a stop in the forest before we come through to enter the giant heather zones. Crossing a few streams and admiring the unique fauna of this area, we walk for a couple of hours to our first campsite on the fringe of the heather zone and the adjoining moorland zone. We arrive in camp at 2600 metres mid-afternoon, allowing time to adjust and relax with the backdrop of Kibo and the spectacular outline of Mawenzi above, and the Masai plains of southern Kenya stretching out below. Total walking time today is around 5 hours.

Day 4 – After a weather dependent al fresco breakfast we leave camp at around 8.30 to start the day's trek to tonight's campsite at Kikelewa Caves. This takes from 6-8 hours and gains 1000 metres over the day taking us to 3600 metres altitude. The terrain is dense heather covered moorland becoming more open and sparse as we trek higher, with volcanic rock appearing. We stop for packed lunches en-route, possibly at the site of another



small group of caves. Today's trekking is accompanied by spectacular views of Mawenzi, especially after lunch when it dominates the view as we walk towards it for the last 2-3 hours into camp. As we near our campsite there are views to Kibo and the summit glaciers on our right and as the sun sets we can watch them turn through shades of red and orange.

Day 5 – Today we trek to Mawenzi Tarn campsite at 4300 metres, which is at the base of Mawenzi, the second peak of Kilimanjaro. The tarn is nestled at the foot of the upper slopes of the peak, in the Northern Corrie, with superb views of the pinnacles and rock features of the North East Ridge and of the high point, Hans Meyer Peak (5149m). To reach today's camp takes us between 5-6 hours through the upper reaches of moorland where the heather is retreating into smaller clumps and hardy grasses interspersed with volcanic rock become more common. There are small valleys that our path takes us through which are the home to Giant Lobelia. These spikey plants are only found in this low alpine moorland and can grow to over 3 metres tall. After a late lunch on arrival the rest of the day is spent relaxing at camp, aiding the acclimatisation process.

Day 6 – Today is an acclimatisation day to be spent either relaxing at camp or on a short walk up the slopes of Mawenzi to a point overlooking a deep cleft (barranco) down from the side of Mawenzi. This reaches a height of roughly 4600 metres, takes around 3 hours (return trip) and is recommended for helping the acclimatisation process. We arrive back in camp in time for lunch with a free afternoon for relaxing and taking in the views from camp.



Day 7 – We leave Mawenzi tarn today on the path we trekked in on, before we turn and cross a ridge on our way to the Saddle, a large expanse of 'alpine desert' linking Mawenzi and the larger peak of Kibo. Small tufts of grass and heather in the shelter of Mawenzi soon become sparse and give way to barren volcanic ash, rock and sand, in one of the most striking landscapes of Kilimanjaro. We trek across the Saddle to Kibo Hut at 4700 metres, this takes 4-5 hours with Kibo directly ahead and very close now. Arriving at camp early afternoon with enough time to sort our gear for the summit climb

and take some rest, we have dinner around 5 to get as much sleep as we can for the agreed 'alpine' (early) start time early the next morning.

Day 8 – Getting up at midnight, we leave for the 'Roof of Africa' around 1am and walk with head torches up a zig-zag path through volcanic scree towards Gilmans Point. We stop for food and drink in the shelter of a cave we reach after a few hours climbing. We aim to reach Gilmans Point in time to witness sunrise over Africa, and from here one can see the curvature of the earth as the sun climbs. 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 the crater as we make our way to the top. When we arrive at the high point of Africa at 5895m we can take in the previously unseen views of Mount Meru and the Shira Plateau along with the summit views of glaciers, the crater and 360 degree panorama of Africa below us. After stopping for photos and celebrating we head back to Gilmans Point and down to Kibo Hut to have some food, then make our way down the Marangu Route to Horombo Hut at 3720 metres. This is a long demanding day with nearly 1200 metres ascent, over 2100 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.

Day 9 – After a more leisurely breakfast we set off from Horombo Hut down to the National Park gate at Marangu, this takes about 5-6 hours in total and takes us through moorland once again with impressive coverings of usnea (old mans beard) draped over fig trees. We enter the forest again on well-made paths, giving us the chance to spot monkeys as we make our way to Mandara Hut for lunch. It is another 2-3 hours to the Marangu park gate where we receive our certificates and are driven back to Moshi for our overnight stay at the Impala Hotel (generally) to enjoy 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 mid-morning.

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