



# MT KILIMANJARO

Choice of Rongai, Machame or Umbwe Routes



Kilimanjaro © C Ward

<b>Grade:</b>	Strenuous / Expedition 	<b>Land-only duration:</b>	8 days
<b>Max altitude:</b>	5895m	<b>Trekking days:</b>	7 days
<b>Dates:</b>	<p>We can run this on dates to suit you for a minimum group size of 2.          There are 2 main trekking seasons in East Africa which are the drier seasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mid-December to mid-March - typically dry and warm but there can be snow</li> <li>• June to early October – typically driest but a bit cooler</li> </ul> <p>Contact us at <a href="mailto:info@trekmountains.com">info@trekmountains.com</a> with your preferred dates</p>		
		<b>Price:</b>	Contact us

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Located on Tanzania's border with Kenya, 330km south of the equator, Kilimanjaro is the highest peak on the African continent. This colossal mountain is composed of three extinct volcanic cones – 3962m Shira, 5149m Mawenzi, and 5895m Kibo, whose crater rim forms the summit. Trekkers have long been drawn to Kilimanjaro and it is not hard to see why. Nowhere else on earth are such extremes of climate and vegetation to be seen in a single location. Glaciers spill off its snowbound summit, leading to desert-like scree and open moorland, where giant lobelias and tree heathers thrive, while its lower slopes are clad in luxuriant rainforest which is home to striking black and white colobus monkeys, antelopes, raucous hornbills and many other animals and birds.

Kilimanjaro is among the world's highest free-standing mountains, rising 4800m above the undulating plain that is the ancestral home of the Masai people. There are several routes up the mountain, presenting different levels of challenge, from the popular 'tourist' trail starting at Marangu to the quieter and more scenic Rongai, Machame and Umbwe routes. The climb up Kilimanjaro is a long, but technically not difficult walk. What makes it challenging is the altitude but by allowing 7 days (and not the 5 or 6 that some parties attempt), proper acclimatization is possible and the summit can be safely achieved by most fit walkers.

We offer a choice of three routes on Kilimanjaro as described below. Please note we do NOT ascend the so-called "Coca Cola" Marangu Route, so named for the large number of trekkers that use it. We believe that the quieter, more scenic paths offer a better mountain experience.

<b>Route description: Rongai Route</b>	<b>Route description: Machame Route</b>	<b>Route description: Umbwe Route</b>
A straight-forward route which is relatively quiet. The route starts close to the Kenya / Tanzania border, and offers big views north into Amboseli National Park. For acclimatisation purposes, we spend an extra day at the spectacular Mawenzi Tarn	The very scenic Machame Route combines spectacular views and scenery, providing good acclimatisation and a quieter path than the Marangu (tourist) route. The route takes a day longer to get to Barranco than the Umbwe route does, and thereafter follows the same route as the Umbwe Route.	Though slightly steeper than the Machame route, the Umbwe route is probably the least used route and therefore avoids even more trekkers. While the distances are shorter, it is harder walking. However it has a reputation for the most beautiful views, so for the keen photographer and fit walker this is probably the better choice. For acclimatisation purposes, we spend an extra day at Barranco.

**Fitness & Experience:** The walk up Kilimanjaro is long and arduous, particularly the approach to the summit. The altitude, combined with the cumulative effects of several days of ascent and descent, mean that a high degree of fitness and stamina are essential. For these basic routes, no technical climbing experience is involved, though some short sections may involve a scramble and may not be suitable for anyone who is affected by vertigo.

The paths are generally good, though they may be muddy especially at lower altitudes. On the summit day you will encounter scree, snow and ice. Trekking poles are recommended, particularly on summit day to help take some of the strain of the long descent.

Regardless of the route you take, the secret of success is to take the climb slowly – you will become familiar with the Swahili cry of 'pole, pole' from your guides. Drinking plenty of water is also essential at altitude and in the heat (at least 4 litres of liquid per day).

# OUTLINE ITINERARY

**Walking and journey times are approximate**

Rongai Route	Machame Route	Umbwe Route
<p><b>Day 1: All Routes: Arrive Kilimanjaro Airport</b>            On arrival transfer to our hotel by road - a journey approximately 1 hour. After your long journey, the day is free to relax at the hotel. In the evening we meet with our local trek guide for a briefing on the climb and to check through equipment and clothing.            Meals included: D</p>		
		
<p>Banana stall, Tanzania © Ann Foulkes trekMountains</p>		
<p><b>Day 2: Rongai Route: Start of Trek to first camp</b>            We set off early for our drive to Rongai at 1950m, a village on the border between Kenya and Tanzania. Here we register for our entry into the National Park, rendezvous with our trekking crew and begin our trek.            The path gains height on a steady basis, moving through farmland and a pine forest. Look out in the forest for colobus monkeys, with their distinctive markings. Herds of elephants live in this zone, so don't be too surprised if you see them too!            Our camp is where the forest meets moorland, offering great views across the plains of Kenya.            Approx. 5 hours walking            700m ascent, 70m descent            Camp around 2650m            Meals included: BLD</p>	<p><b>Day 2: Machame Route: Start of Trek to Machame</b>            Before the climb starts there is an hour's drive to the start of the trek at 1800m. This is an opportunity to be introduced to our assistant guide, the cook and porters, who will do their best to assist us reach the summit. From here we walk through farms and montane forest to Machame hut (3000m - 1200m of ascent). The lower slopes of Kilimanjaro receive ample rainfall and are very fertile and though much of the area is given over to coffee plantations, a great range of crops can be grown here. Most of the villagers are subsistence farmers, who cultivate small plots of land and graze a few head of livestock. Leaving the villages behind, we enter the rainforest, which is home to many beautiful birds and animals. The heat will slow us down but by walking quietly, we have good chances of spotting black and white colobus monkeys and we will undoubtedly hear the raucous call of the hornbill. Climbing slowly and steadily, we eventually emerge above the tree line amongst giant heather to the Machame hut, where the tents are pitched.            Approx 6 hours walking            1200m ascent            Camp at 3000m            Meals included: BLD</p>	<p><b>Day 2: Umbwe Route: Start of Trek to Umbwe</b>            After a short drive, we arrive at the trail head at an altitude of 1650m on the lush forested lower slopes of the mountain. This is an opportunity to be introduced to our assistant guide, the cook and porters, who will do their best to assist us reach the summit. We set off on an easy trail through forest and farmland. The lower slopes of Kilimanjaro receive ample rainfall and are very fertile and though much of the area is given over to coffee plantations, a great range of crops can be grown here. Most of the villagers are subsistence farmers, who cultivate small plots of land and graze a few head of livestock. Leaving the villages behind, we enter the rainforest, which is home to many beautiful birds and animals. The heat will slow us down but by walking quietly, we have good chances of spotting black and white colobus monkeys and we will undoubtedly hear the raucous call of the hornbill. Climbing slowly and steadily, we ascend the ridge between the Umbwe and Lonzo Rivers, a steep but very beautiful route – in places we use tree roots to assist as hand holds. The dense rainforest starts to lighten up as we reach the clearing at Umbwe cave camp (3000m), where the tents are pitched amongst the lichen covered trees.            Approx 5-6 hours walking            1350m ascent            Camp at 3000m            Meals included: BLD</p>

<p><b>Day 3: Rongai Route: Trek to Kikelewa Caves</b> Our ascent this morning takes us to our lunch spot at the "Second Cave". From here we can savour views of Kibo peak. Our afternoon walk heads towards the raggedy peak of Mawenzi, crossing open moorland to our camp in a sheltered spot near the Kikelewa Caves. This area is home to the spectacular giant tree-groundsels, which grow only in these highland zones of East Africa. Approx 9-9½ hours walking. Ascent 1250m, descent 200m Camp at 3550m Meals included: BLD</p>	<p><b>Day 3: Machame Route: Machame to Shira</b> Today we climb 840m to the Shira hut camping area. Walking through the rainforest the track can be very muddy (good boots and gaiters recommended!), Leaving the rainforest the trail follows a steep rocky ridge to reach the flatter ground of the Shira plateau. We should be able to spot Mt Meru above the clouds. The path is then level until near the hut, we cross a stream and then a small rise to the camping area. Approx 6-8 hours walking Camp at 3850m Meals included: BLD</p>	<p><b>Day 3: Umbwe Route: Umbwe Cave Camp to Barranco Hut</b> We continue the climb up the ridge, which in places narrows to give a steep drop to the side, so not suitable for those with vertigo. As the forest thins, we emerge onto the giant heather zone. During today's walk, we have a short 10m scramble on rock, with tree roots for support at one point – most trekkers find this straightforward. The trail continues up the ridge and becomes wider and easier as we approach the camp site near the Barranco hut. Approx 4-5 hours walking Ascent 950m Camp at 3950m Meals included: BLD</p>
<p><b>Day 4: Rongai Route: Trek to Mawenzi Tarn</b> One of the most fascinating things about Kilimanjaro is the range of climatic and vegetation zones that we pass through as we ascend the mountain. Today's walk offers panoramic views as we leave the Giant Groundsel and cross grassy slopes. At the altitude of our campsite, spectacularly located by a lovely tarn below the jagged peaks of Mawenzi, the vegetation is reduced to just grasses. We will spend the afternoon and the next day here to rest, acclimatise and explore this lovely spot. Approx 3-4 hours walking. Ascent 700m, Descent 30m Camp at 4300m Meals included: BLD</p>	<p><b>Day 4: Machame Route: Shira to Barranco Hut</b> As an undulating trail, with a total ascent of only 140m but there are some incredible views of Kibo. The trail goes under the Lava Tower and the Great Western Breach of the summit. There are some impressive cliffs and rock formations all the way with some interesting colours if the light is good. Dropping steeply down the side of a ridge we reach the Barranco Hut, close to the foot of the Barranco wall. 7 hours walking Camp at 3950m Meals included: BLD</p>	<p><b>Day 4: Umbwe Route: Acclimatisation day Barranco</b> Enjoy a well-earned rest day in the spectacular surrounds of the Barranco. To help with acclimatising, we climb 300-400 metres, descending to sleep at the lower altitude of the camp. In the moorland surrounds of the camp, rocky outcrops shelter giant lobelias and senecios, where birds like the streaky seed eater and alpine chat flit to and fro. We are also likely to see the four striped grass mouse, foraging for food scraps around the camp. Ascent 300-400m, Descent 300-400m Camp at 3950m Meals included: BLD</p>
<p><b>Day 5: Rongai Route: Acclimatisation Mawenzi Tarn</b> The altitude of Kilimanjaro means it is necessary to spend a day here acclimatising before ascending further. There is the chance to ascend to around 4500m, a walk which offers lovely views and which is an important aid to acclimatisation, thereby helping us reach the summit safely. Return to our campsite for an afternoon of rest. Approx 2-3 hours walking. Ascent 200m, Descent 200m Camp at 4300m Meals included: BLD</p>	<p><b>Day 5: Machame &amp; Umbwe Routes: Baranco Hut to Karanga Valley</b> The trail climbs up the formidable looking Baranco Wall - but like many such trails it looks worse from a distance. Once on the wall care is needed in a few exposed places and here our guides will assist. Mostly however it is a good track, although steep, and we should reach the top of the wall in just over an hour. The path crosses a plateau area divided by several valleys with superb views up towards the southern ice-fields; in the order that we see them they are Heim, Kersten and Decken glaciers. We descend fairly steeply to the Karanga valley camp site. Approx 6-7 hours walking Camp at 4000m Meals included: BLD</p>	
<p><b>Day 6: Rongai Route: Trek to Kibo Hut</b> Today's walk crosses the saddle between the peaks of Mawenzi and Kibo, passing the wreckage of a small aircraft en-route. It is</p>	<p><b>Day 6: Machame &amp; Umbwe Routes: Karanga Valley to Barafu</b> An undulating route goes from the Karanga Valley to the junction of the Mweka route. From here there is a final pull up to the Barafu hut – Barafu means 'ice' in Swahili. Located at 4600m, we are in fact still below the snow line, but there is little vegetation at this altitude. Bird</p>	

<p>a short day of easy trekking, but no doubt we will be noticing the altitude. On arrival at camp it is advised to rest well and to prepare for a long day of trekking tomorrow. Approx 5 hours walking. Ascent 600m, Descent 200m Camp at 4750m Meals included: BLD</p>	<p>life too is scarce though we may encounter the white-necked raven, hearing its echoing croak as it wheels about scavenging for food. The tents are pitched among rocky outcrops for shelter, from where magnificent views of the summit of Kilimanjaro and Mawenzi peak to the east are ample reward for the day's efforts. Approx 6-7 hours walking. Ascent 650m Camp at 4600m Meals included: BLD</p>
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East Africa sunset © Ann Foulkes trekMountains

<p><b>Day 7: Rongai Route: Trek to summit, descend to Horombo</b> We set off very early, typically around 1am on what will be a very long day of walking. Ascending around 1000m by the light of head torches we zigzag up for around 4-5 hours to the crater rim at Gillmans Point. From here we can watch sunrise on Mawenzi Peak, where we were 2 days earlier. From Gillman's the ascent to Uhuru Peak takes around another 3 hours. At 5895m we are on the highest point of the whole of the African continent. African mornings usually allow great views of the crater, Mawenzi and</p>	<p><b>Day 7: Machame &amp; Umbwe Routes: Barafu to the Summit and descend to Mweka</b> This is the toughest day of the whole trek - 10-15 hours walking at high altitude over steep ground. Total ascent 1300m. We set off from Barafu Hut at 1.00am with head torches to climb the steep scree slope to Stella Point on the crater rim at 5700m. This is a long hard slog but by pacing ourselves and taking it slowly we should reach the rim just in time to enjoy the incredible spectacle of sunrise. From Stella Point it is another 1- 1 ½ Hours along the rim to Uhuru Peak - 5895m. Snow may be encountered on the scree slope and walking poles are useful for ascent and descent. After the exhilaration of the summit we descend slowly to our overnight camp for a late breakfast and couple of hours rest in your tent. All too soon the guide will be urging you to start the long descent to Mweka Hut via the heather moorland. We reach Mweka Hut camping area in late afternoon for a well-deserved rest. Approx 10-15 hours walking Ascent 1300m, Descent 2795m, Summit 5895m Meals included: BLD</p>
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beyond to the neighbouring mountain of Mt Meru which stands at 4565m.  
 Our descent follows the same route back to our previous night's camp at Kibo Hut for lunch before descending the gradual path down to the Horombo huts where we camp.  
 The trekking today is very tiring, not only because of the ascent and descents, but also because of the altitude. Trekking poles are strongly recommended for all.  
 Approx 14-15 hours walking.  
 Ascent 1250m, Descent 2250m, Summit 5895m  
 Camp at 3720m  
 Meals included: BLD



Mt Kilimanjaro summit © C Dougherty

**Day 8: Rongai Route:  
 Trek to end of trek, transfer to hotel, depart Tanzania**  
 Descending from Horombo Huts we notice that the vegetation changes again, finally trekking once again through pine forests, passing through the traditional first campsite on the Marangu Route at the Mandara Huts before reaching Marangu Gate at 1900m.  
 Our trekking crew will leave us here, and we continue by road transfer to the group hotel where we can relish the showers in the day rooms before the transfer to Kilimanjaro airport.  
 Approx 5 hours walking.  
 Ascent 350m, descent 2385m  
 Meals included: BL

**Day 8: Machame & Umbwe Routes:  
 Mweka to the end of the trek, transfer to hotel, depart Tanzania**  
 After breakfast we descend the park gate. This can be a wonderful walk through the mountain forest - superb scenery and plenty of birds and calls of the colobus monkeys. We have chance to freshen up in our day room at our hotel before our flight. Transfer to airport.  
 Descent 1600m  
 Meals included: BL



Masai tribesman © Ann Foulkes trekMountains

**Important note regarding the timing of return flights:** if you are flying from Kilimanjaro airport on day 8, it is essential that your flight must not depart Kilimanjaro airport earlier than **1900 hours**.  
**Whilst we expect that the trek will run as per the itinerary, participants should accept that there is a possibility of changes being necessary subject to local conditions.**

## Preparing for your trek:

Please see our document “Preparing for your trek to East Africa” at <http://trekmountains.com/pre-trek/> for all the advice you need about visas, insurance, money, equipment, and medical matters.

## Flights:

You are welcome to book your own international flights to Kilimanjaro for this trip.

If there is a group of you we may be able to book your international flights for you – please contact us.

**No flights should be booked until you have received written confirmation from the trekMountains office that your departure is guaranteed to run.**

## Minimum numbers and our pricing policy:

This trip is advertised based on a 5 person price based on twin sharing rooms. It can, however, be run with just 2 people.

We can offer this trip as a trip just for your party on dates to suit you. If the 5 person twin share price is not relevant to your party, we will quote according to the number of participants and the number of single / shared rooms that you require.

Alternatively, you may prefer that we open up the trip to other bookings. In that case, if there are less than 5 of you in your party we will give you a price based on the number of participants so that the trip can be guaranteed immediately. The final price will reduce as more trekkers join the trip.

## The Price Includes:

- National Park fees worth \$820 are now included in the basic price.
- Airport transfers on days 1 and 8
- All meals from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 8
- Transport to / from the mountain and all land transport involved in the itinerary
- 1 night at our group hotel
- Day room last day
- Kilimanjaro climb with full board, local trek guide, cook & porters, camping equipment (not sleeping bags / Karrimat/) including a professional English speaking leader

## Not Included:

- International flights
- Visa for Tanzania –see “Preparing for your trek to East Africa” for prices
- Airport departure taxes
- Airport transfers on non-standard days (ie other than days 1 & 8 of itinerary)
- Tips –see “Preparing for your trek to East Africa” at for our guide to tipping
- Items of a personal nature including drinks, laundry, telephone calls & souvenirs
- Sleeping bag/karrimat.
- Travel insurance



Zebras – safari extension © Ann Foulkes, trekMountains

## Options:

- **Extra nights** are available in our group hotel – see the dates and prices list for details.
- **Accommodation** is usually in twin rooms and twin tents with another trekker of the same gender, or with a person you name on your booking form.
- **Single rooms and single tents** are available – see the dates and prices list for details.
- **Safari extension packages** can also be organized in East Africa. Please refer to our East African extensions dossier for more details. Extensions should be arranged to booking international flights.