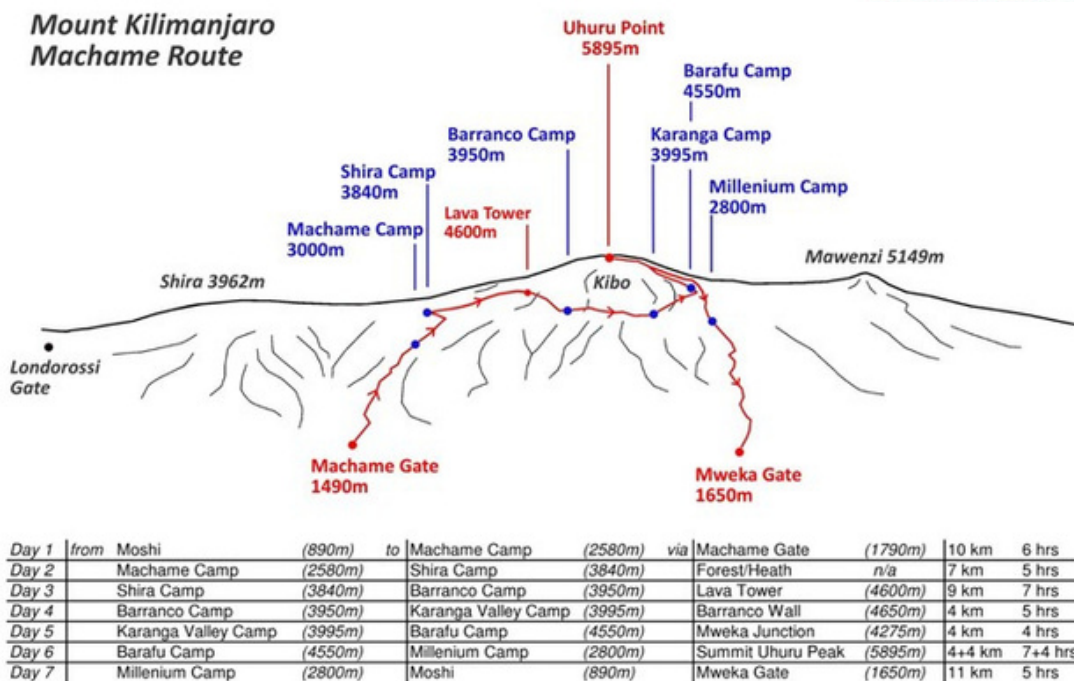


## MACHAME ROUTE

The Machame route on Kilimanjaro is a seven-day camping route which allows for excellent acclimatisation and particularly diverse scenery. It has been called the Whiskey route in the past and nowadays about 35% of all climbers on the mountain use it.

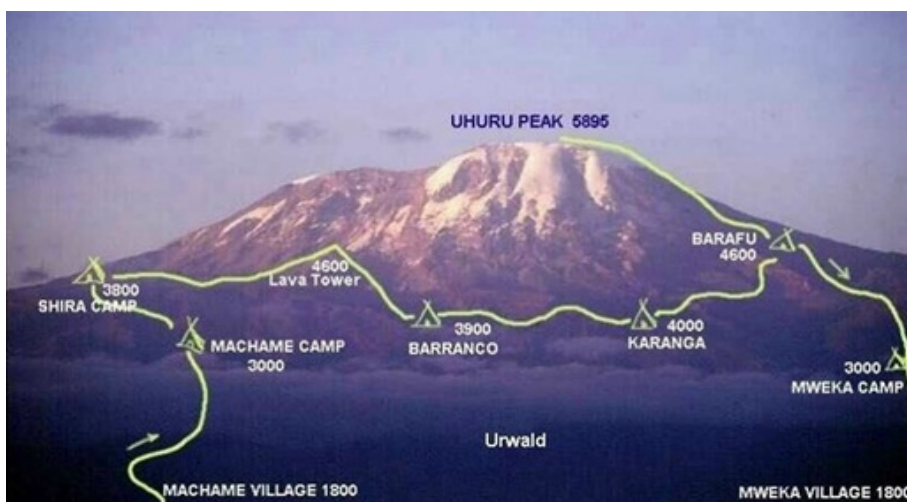
In a matter of days, you will climb Kilimanjaro from the equator up to an Arctic zone, moving through grasslands, tropical rainforest, alpine meadows, moorlands and high desert to snow and ice. Each day on this route presents quite a distinct ecosystem to experience, which is one reason it is so popular.

The other reason is that the seven-day programme begins on the south west side of the mountain and traverses around to the south east side, enabling you to sleep at the same altitude for three consecutive nights which significantly aids altitude acclimatisation.



The route starts at Machame Gate on the south west of the mountain and ascends to the first camp at the edge of the forest and then continues up and traverses the mountain for several days before climbing to the peak from the final camp on the south east side of the peak. The descent is almost directly south.

The entire climb up and down is approximately 62 km/ 37 miles from gate to gate. The height gain from the gate to the summit is 4,157 metres, which is ascended over six days of around 5-7 hours walking each day.



The picture to the left shows how the route ascends one side of the mountain, maintains a sleeping altitude of around 3,900m (Shira Camp, Barranco Camp and Karanga Camp) for three nights which aids acclimatisation, and then goes up to Barafu Camp at 46,00m for the final walk to the top.

**Altitude profile of the Machame route:**

The seven-day route on Machame allows for a first night at 3,000m, then the following three nights at around 3,900m, then the final camp at 4,600m at midnight on day 6. Summit day involves ascending 1,385m to Uhuru Peak and then descending all the way down to 3,800m. Day 7 is then a descent through forest to the gate.

<i>Day</i>	<i>Start Level</i>	<i>Daily High Point</i>	<i>Sleep Level</i>	<i>Camp name</i>
Day 1	1,830m	3,000m	3,000m	Machame
Day 2	3,000m	3,850m	3,850m	Shira
Day 3	3,850m	4,560m	3,950m	Barranco
Day 4	3,950m	4,200m	3,950m	Karanga
Day 5	3,950m	4,600m	4,600m	Barafu
Day 6	4,600m	5,985m	3,800m	Millennium
Day 7	3,800m	3,800m	1,830m	

**Camps on the Machame route:**

The camps for the seven-day Machame route are Machame, Shira, Barranco, Karanga Valley, Barafu and Millennium (or sometimes Mweka). A full description of each camp is below.

Machame and Millennium Camp are on the tree line and have a number of campsites set in small clearings in the forest. The whole site can accommodate around 100 tents. You will see a central ranger station and a number of brick toilets and long drop latrines. The air is quite humid and it's not too cold; being right in the trees you won't see lots of other people round the site.

Shira Camp is situated on the vast Shira plateau which is a volcanic spill-off from the last explosion some 100,000 years ago. Open and exposed and often dusty, you will find more fragile plants among the rocks. Brick toilets and latrines and Ranger huts are around and the area is so huge it is easy to spread out and have some privacy. Shira could accommodate hundreds of tents fairly easily. Expect it to be colder here, more windy potentially. The views of the summit massif are really amazing, especially at dawn and dusk, and it's worth getting up in the night if there is a full moon to see it rise behind the summit.

Barranco Camp is at the head of the steep valley which drops down into the Umbwe route that goes all the way down to Moshi. Tucked up underneath the summit massif there are huge dramatic cliffs to see, some remains of hanging glaciers and often the whole of Kibo will be plastered in snow. Meanwhile looking down the valley you can see the lights of Moshi. The campsite has brick toilets and latrines (long drops), a Rangers hut, and there is a lot of plant life here so it's green and verdant. The camp can take over a hundred tents quite easily but space is limited so you can sometimes expect to walk a distance to find your tent.

Karanga Camp is very open and situated somewhat on a slope so make sure your tent is on a flat piece of ground. There are great views of the summit massif again and you can see the route to the summit quite easily. Looking downhill you can see the lights of Moshi. Brick toilets and pit latrines, a Rangers Hut and space for at least a hundred tents. It can be cold and windy here, and the cloud can come and go very fast. Water is a problem at this camp, the porters have to walk forty minutes back down the trail to the nearest stream.

Barafu, meaning 'ice' in Swahili, is the final camp at 4,600m. It is no longer covered in permanent snow but is cold and rocky and exposed. People definitely feel the altitude here and you can expect snow and often wind. The campsites are dotted among nooks and crannies in the rocks, running the length of the ridge. Some camps are far below the Rangers hut and the start of the summit climb, so it can add more than half an hour to the ascent. With brick toilets and latrines, the facilities are now good but water is in short supply so the porters are forced to travel back downhill to the nearest stream. The Rangers here have large heavy duty stretchers at hand which have a single wheel underneath, so it's possible to get people down quickly. There is also a helipad at the camp.