

February 19-28, 2024

KILIMANJARO TRIP PREPARATION

Is Kilimanjaro right for me?

Climbing Kilimanjaro is an incredible experience. However, like with any challenge, there will be some bumps along the way. One thing to remember is that things in Africa happen at a different pace. You may feel like things are a bit chaotic, but it is the normal way of life here. Things do not always work and conditions might not be what you would expect at home. However, the people are very friendly and keen to help.

It is not surprising to see people begging. Please do not give in and perpetuate this damaging practice. Tips are customary but should be given at the gate on the last day for distribution. This is much better than giving individuals money privately or secretly, which some people do because they think they're doing it 'right', but this is never the case and it always causes problems long after you have left.

Flights to Kilimanjaro

Kilimanjaro International airport (JRO) is the most convenient point of entry to Tanzania, as it is only 48 km from Moshi Town. An airport transfer can be arranged and must be requested in advance. The charge for an airport transfer is up to £40 / \$50 USD per vehicle (3 / 4 people) per transfer. We don't include this as standard in our trip fee as some people arrive by air, others by road so it's not applicable to everyone on a trip.

Visa for Tanzania

You can buy your visa on arrival in Tanzania very easily. For most nationalities, it's US\$50, though there is a higher charge for the US and some other nations at \$100, payable in US dollars. You do not need a passport photograph. You need a yellow fever certificate only if you are coming from a country with endemic yellow fever.

Vaccinations and Travel Health

You will need to visit your family doctor prior to your trip to discuss vaccinations. You do not need a yellow fever certificate to enter Tanzania unless you are entering from another country where yellow fever is prevalent.

Trip Insurance for Kilimanjaro

You will need to check carefully that you get the right kind of insurance coverage. Your policy should cover trekking to 5,895m and helicopter rescue, but it does not need to cover technical climbing. It is also important to make sure that you have cancellation cover. We encourage you to buy insurance as soon as you have booked your flight and trip, in case there is a need for cancellation. Do also take your papers with you and make sure your tent mate knows where it is, in case somebody else needs to make a phone call for you. Make sure to provide us with your insurance information when you're in Moshi so we can pass it to the helicopter search and rescue company if an evacuation is necessary.

Money

The local currency in Tanzania is the Tanzanian shilling. Though be careful not to mix up Kenyan and Tanzanian Shillings as there is a 20 times difference in value! You can check the current exchange rate on [xe.com](https://www.xe.com).

There is an ATM in town which takes Visa and Mastercard and there is a bank with forex facilities. Do also remember to have small denomination notes because many local places will not be able to offer change for large notes. You can take sterling, euro or dollars, and change it easily, including small amounts at the hotel desk.

Electrical

In most parts of Tanzania, they use the same 3-pin (type G) plugs as in the UK. However, the electrical supply in Tanzania is not as closely controlled or as reliable. If you have any very expensive equipment then please be aware that an electrical surge or voltage/frequency change could potentially affect it. An expert might be able to advise on surge protectors.

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KILIMANJARO DAILY ROUTINE

How much will you carry?

We use porters to carry the bags, the gear and the food, so you can concentrate on your climb of Kilimanjaro. However, you will be expected to carry a daysack with some of your own personal equipment which you'll need for the day such as water, spare clothes, camera and waterproofs. This is normally about 5 or 6 kg. Every person will have their own porter carrying their bag so nothing ever gets lost.

The porters are not allowed to carry more than 20kg in total (including their own clothing, so please do not overfill your bags). The maximum per bag is 15kg. They also carry bags on their heads, even rucksacks, so it is probably more convenient to bring a duffle bag for your gear. We will also put your bags into waterproof sacks in case of rain.

Keeping in touch with home

Your mobile phone should work all the way up the mountain (slightly dependant on which network you are using) as long as you have roaming access. Please bring your own power packs. You may need to walk a little distance to find a spot with a signal. Also, do not expect to get 3G connection, mostly you will find it is voice only.

Keeping dry and warm

There is little doubt that you will have some rain, and it is likely to be in the lower regions around the montane or forest level. Waterproofs are necessary; remember that on the equator the rainy season is traditionally April/May and October/November.

Expect short-term extreme conditions, i.e. sharp showers of rain, hot sun, gusts of wind, snow and low night temperatures. Clear nights will be colder but more beautiful, and generally, the cloud builds up mid-morning, only to dissipate again with the setting sun. Above Shira Camp (day 2) you may get snow, sleet and even hail. The ground is more open and exposed so it will be important to have some dry bags for your daysack (or a cover) and all the appropriate clothing for protection against the elements. Up higher at Barafu Camp, it will be colder and windier so the shell jacket is really vital; temperatures can drop dramatically, and there may be snow. Summit morning can be icy underfoot, and very cold (minus 10°C) so good boots with hats and gloves are important.

Work on a 'wet and dry' system so that if your T-shirt gets wet during the day, you always have a dry T-shirt and warm top to change into the moment you get to camp. On the lower slopes in the forest you can use a poncho or an umbrella to keep dry, but higher up where it's more windy and cold you will need your waterproof shell. In the evenings you will want a lightweight down jacket or fleece jacket.

On summit night you will want to take all your warm clothes and protective shell, it can be very windy and cold as you go up and especially at Stella Point. Take gloves and mitts if you have them, a warm hat and an extra layer just in case. Don't forget to take your sunglasses and sunscreen with you for when the sun comes up, and don't forget to put the sunscreen on since the glare off the snow and from the sun itself is very powerful.

At night use your sleeping bag with as few layers on as possible, but keep the top of the bag zipped up to prevent heat loss. If you want to add warmth to the bag then put clothes underneath for extra insulation and put a jacket over the foot end of the bag. Also stack your daypack upright against the end of the sleeping bag to stop your feet pressing against the tent wall.

Sometimes it is the heat and sun that is the problem; always use good quality sunscreen and moisturize well in the evenings. Take a good sunhat and even use an umbrella against the strong direct sunlight.

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KILIMANJARO DAILY ROUTINE

Daily routine on Mount Kilimanjaro

During your climb of Kilimanjaro generally, 'bed tea' is at about 6:30 - 7:00am, breakfast is between 7:30am and 8:00am, and departure from camp is at 8:30am latest. There is a snack lunch at midday, tea and biscuits around 4pm and dinner at 7pm. Summit morning is different; tea and biscuits at 11:30pm and start hiking at midnight or sometimes 1am.

Most daily hikes take from 4 - 7 hours. The pace is slow and not forced at all. There is a rest at least once every hour and plenty of time to take photos, enjoy the view and chat. When you arrive at the campsite you will find the tents set up and your bags ready to collect. In the morning please have your bags packed before breakfast.

Summit day

Expect a long day starting at midnight and getting all the way back down to High Camp by about 4pm in the afternoon. The route up will be in the darkness and it will be cold and often windy. Do prepare with good warm clothing and protect your extremities and face.

From Barafu Camp to the crater rim will take about 6 to 8 hours, and you will arrive with the dawn which is very special. From the rim (Stella Point) it is a further hour to the top, so expect summit time to be between 7am and 9am. With an hour on top for photos and enjoying the exceptional view, and feeling absolutely elated, the route down is dusty, loose and quite a strain on the knees. Take it easy and stay with one of the guides; they will split up to cover all the mini groups that naturally form for the descent.

When you get back to Barafu pack your bags for the porters to take down (you should prepare this the night before), take a rest and lunch and then drop down to High Camp which is a further two hours to the edge of the forest. Some people question this, but it is necessary to get lower because Barafu is still at 4,600 metres and your body will thank you for losing altitude. It may be the last thing you want to do after having summited Kilimanjaro, but it is necessary!

Tips for Your Guides on Mount Kilimanjaro

Tips are a part of the culture and on average you should anticipate \$100.00 - \$125.00 USD in local currency to give at the end of the trip.

Please prepare your tips before going on the mountain by changing any money into local currency and into small denominational notes like 5000 or 10,000 Tanzanian shillings. Please give your tips as a group at the gate. Do not give the tip to the guides or the porters directly. Please do not give an individual tip to a specific porter or guide during the climb of Kilimanjaro. This breeds suspicion and encourages them to pester tourists for more money. We try to maintain consistency and fairness at all times. Please also remember that money is not the only way of showing your gratitude, a genuine thank you in front of all the other staff goes a long way to making someone happy.

Camping

We camp in tents on the Machame Route. Camping is liberating and really makes you feel as if you are on an expedition! Nothing to worry about, it is enjoyable and hygienic and there is enough privacy and comfort. If you haven't camped since being in the Scouts or Guides the word should not be associated with hardship or discomfort. Most worries are dispelled on the first day. The tents are two-person North Face mountain tents and we provide comfortable foam mattresses with waterproof covers.

Toilets

Nearly all the campsites now have newly constructed toilets with long drop facilities. It is important to take a torch with you at night and take a responsibility to keep the huts clean. Going to the toilet behind a bush is strictly forbidden, but we do also bring up our own toilet tent with chemical toilets. If you get caught out on the path then you are allowed to pee behind rocks or bushes, but if you need to go for a poo then the rule is to pack out your own toilet paper in a plastic bag and put it in the rubbish when you come to camp.

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Garbage

All garbage is collected by the staff and carried down the mountain. Do not throw garbage down the long drop (toilet paper is fine) and make a habit of picking up litter that you see on the trail. The responsibility for keeping Kilimanjaro clean is on the shoulders of every visitor. The mess tent will have a garbage bag hanging by the door so please do use it. In the toilet tents, please put toilet paper in the plastic bag hanging on the hook.

Hotel

The accommodation in Moshi is at the Keys Hotel Mbokomu Branch and it is about ten minutes drive from the centre of Moshi and is safe, with a high wall, but that should not stop you from taking all usual security measures with your belongings. The staff are friendly and speak English. There is a bar, a swimming pool, a laundry service, a restaurant, internet, left luggage, TV's in most rooms, fans in every room and hot water.

Food

All of our food is fresh and the meals are tasty and well prepared and served in comfortable mess tents with tables and chairs. Three-course meals with vegetables, fruit, salads, desserts, soups, popcorn, biscuits and a complete range of beverages including herbal teas. We want you to enjoy your holiday on Kilimanjaro and that means good food!

Our cooks are all well experienced in Western tastes so expect as an example a soup starter with bread, tomato and avocado side salad followed by chicken casserole with boiled potatoes and julienne carrots with a fresh fruit medley to finish with, and coffee and chocolate for supper. We also provide lots of pasta with vegetables, beef stew, fried fish with potatoes, and fried chicken.

If you have dietary preferences, please let us know. The cooks can easily cater for most preferences, although celiacs should bring their own snack supplies from home as gluten-free snacks can be hard to source in Tanzania. Sweets and chocolate are all available in the shops in Moshi, as are things like batteries, but you may want to bring your own supply from home.

Water

We do not bring bottled water on the mountain; we boil all water which comes from the rivers and glacial streams plus it is also treated. The staff will fill your water bottles every evening.