

Maasai Wanderings

2010

"9 Day: Kilimanjaro Challenge " Rongai or Machame Route

Rongai:

The Rongai route is remote, drier and certainly one of the least crowded except for the final push. It is a good option if you climb during the rainy months (April, May, November) since you avoid the rain forest and the rains at the start! The Northern side of Kilimanjaro at times dramatic, and the scenery and remoteness of this route makes it a perfect option. The starting point is a long way from the main towns of Arusha and Moshi, for this reason we start this climb with an overnight in the foothills village of Marangu.

Day One

Arrive, meet and transfer to accommodation, quite a journey depending on your arrival point, followed by pre-trek briefing and equipment check.

Capricorn Hotel (for a late arrival clients will stay in Moshi) **Dinner**

Day Two

Hike: 8km Altitude: 2010m-2640m 4-5 hours

We carry out registration formalities at Marangu Gate and then set off for the transfer to Rongai, and the trailhead of Nale Moru, a wooden village on the Kenyan border. We take our lunch while the guides organise the porters and luggage. We set off for an easy first hour amongst corn and potato fields with the chattering of children following along behind. After about an hour we enter the rainforest, hoping to spot the beautiful Black and White Colobus Monkey. We exit the green areas and enter the heath zone, with buffalo and elephant tracks to be spotted. After some time we cross a stream and then enter the camp, funnily enough - no caves in sight despite its name! On a clear evening, there is a wonderful view across to the Kenyan plains below.

1st Cave Camp Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Three

Hike: 12km Altitude: 2640m-3600m 6-7 hours

We begin our day along a dusty track into the true heather zone and the vegetation diminishes.

It is a wide open horizon today, so sunscreen and hats are essential. We climb up a few small hills and climb around some rocky areas but arrive at a small cave - lunchtime. We head across to the east and our campsite nearer to Mawenzi, crossing a stream before arriving into camp.

Kikelelwa Camp

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Four

Hike: 9km Altitude: 3600m-4550m 3-4 hours

There is a dry and steep, grassy area that meets us first thing this morning and ultimately allows us magic views across the wild lands we are within. The path then opens out to barren and rocky areas and we make our way to the base of Mawenzi, a spectacular and jagged peak above camp. The sunset and sunrise against the towering spires are breathtaking.

Mawenzi Tarn camp

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Five

Hike: - Altitude: 4550m+ 3-4 hours

This is a rest day, and we spend the time taking part in an acclimatisation walk in the morning after breakfast. We scramble our way up the rocky ridges with care, but are rewarded with the most unspoilt scene. We return to camp for lunch and an afternoon of resting and football match: Trekkers vs. Maasai Wanderings Kili Team!

Mawenzi Tarn Camp

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Six

Hike: 11km Altitude: 4550m-4700m 4-5 hours

We set off after our hearty breakfast, across the windy saddle between the peaks of Kibo and Mawenzi. It is open and barren, but our focus is the camp far in front of us and the summit assault to come. Once we reach the camp, a hub for two routes, we rest as much as possible in preparation for the challenge ahead and enjoy an early dinner.

Kibo Camp

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Seven

Hike: 27km Altitude: 4700m-5896m-3720m 14-16 hours

Summit day and so headlamps must be ready! We set off in a shuffle, ascending the volcanic scree along a zig-zagging trail to Gilman's Point. The going gets tough almost immediately but we are allowed the luxury of regular rest stops alongside caves and rocky outcrops. This is where your mental toughness will shine, forcing yourself to put one foot in front of the other in a "I think I can" manner. Pole pole and listening to the encouragement of your guide will get you up to Gilman's for a much needed rest point before continuing to skirt the Crater to Uhuru Peak - 'The Roof of Africa'. After a short time to gather your breath and photographs, we begin our descent back to Kibo for brunch and a short rest before continuing on to Horombo Camp. This is a very tough day but the backdrop of Kibo behind you is a tribute to the achievement you have just been awarded.

Horombo Camp

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Eight

Hike: 18km Altitude: 3720m-1620m 6-7 hours

Final opportunities to take pictures of your Maasai Wanderings Mountain Team - and on a clear morning, Kibo will loom large as a backdrop to your photographs. We will also deal with the issue of tipping (ask for suggested guidelines if you are unsure) and the team will send you off on your final stretch with our farewell 'Kili Song'. We head off down the path, into the areas of the

Giant Senecias to Mandara Hut for a lunch stop. Then we enter the forest for a final descent to Marangu Gate. We complete the sign-out formalities before waving good-bye to our new 'Kili' family and transfer to Arusha.

At the lodge, its time to take a warm shower, a quick nap and get some laundry done. We have also organised for a full body scrub to help cleanse the body externally from one week in harsh conditions. It is a very welcome and relaxing experience as reward for your conquest. Trek debrief and certificate presentation.

Karama Lodge

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Nine

Transfer to airport departure for your journey beyond...

Breakfast

Or...

Machame:

The Machame Route (also known as the Whiskey Route) is the 2nd most popular route to Kibo. It is a beautifully scenic route commencing with rain forests and onto the dry area of Shira Plateau, the Barranco area with its senecios (mountain cactus) and "Breakfast Wall", the exquisite Karanga Valley with its water streams and finally the rocky and inhospitable Barafu - last stop before you make your midnight dash for the top of Kibo.

Day One

Arrive into Arusha arrival point. Meet and transfer to accommodation followed by pre-trek briefing and equipment check

Karama Lodge

Dinner

Day Two

Hike: 9.2km Altitude: 1820m-3020m 5-6 hours

We set off for the transfer to Machame and complete the registration formalities as the guides organise the porters and luggage. We set off for an easy first hour along a 4WD track and then it gets steeper as we head into our lunch rest stop. After lunch the track gets steeper, there is the sounds of a stream to the right and you will need to take care of your step as areas can be muddy. A couple of hours after lunch, the green hut of Machame comes into view.

Machame Camp

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Three

Hike: 6km Altitude: 3020m-3830m 5-6 hours

The climbing gets steeper again today, and although a shorter distance, the path is rock and dusty. The route becomes quite bare and the first of the giant senecias come into view - we step slowly in order to optimise our acclimatisation

Shira Camp

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Four

Hike: 10.4km Altitude: 3830m-4580m-3900m 5-6 hours

The first part of the day is littered with boulders and rocks and slowly swings uphill. We reach Lava Tower for lunch and then literally descend into camp; taking care with our step because the path is dusty and rocky.

Barranco Camp

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Five

Hike: 5.1km Altitude: 3900m-4100m 3-4 hours

Immediately on the outskirts of the camp we cross a small stream before being faced with the sheer wall of Barranco - infamously known as 'Breakfast'! It takes just over an hour of scrambling up the steep climb but the views are breathtaking and it is a thrilling experience. You will be able to see far below where our camp was and the porters as they pack it up. We then fall into a rhythm of ascending and descending a series of ridges as we cross our last water point and arrive into the green valley of Karanga.

Karanga Valley Camp

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Six

Hike: 3.5km Altitude: 4100m-4330m 3-4 hours

The route today is short and steep, as we enter a barren landscape of boulders and shattered rocks. We come to a point along the route which is a fork: up to Barafu and down to Mweka. At this stage we choose up and approx half an hour we reach camp; sheer cliffs and large rocks. Today is an early dinner and early bed - although you will find it difficult to actually sleep, rest your body in preparation for the midnight assault on the summit. This is probably the hardest physical your body will do in its life.

Barafu Camp

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Seven

Hike: 17.5km Altitude: 4330m-5896m-3040m 12-15 hours

Summit day and headlamps must be ready!

The first hour or so is rocky and you must step carefully and then you will turn right and enter a snow-covered area from where you can see the glaciers above. On a moonlit night you can switch off your headlamp and walk in the moon light - a wonderful experience. After about 2 hours the steepness will start to set in. From now on, the struggle is mental as well as physical. You may need to rest every 15 minutes: one leg in front of the other, your mouth will be dry and you will start to feel the cold. Near Stella Point the lava field is like loose sand. You step up and slide back. Most climbers reach Stella point after about 5 hours or so. After a quick rest, it's on to Uhuru Peak just as the sun appears over Mawenzi. **And then you are there!** But please be prepared for an aftershock - the way down is a steep, rigorous route via Stella Point down the mountain to Barafu where we will stop for brunch. (Many hikers are unprepared for this 2-hour ordeal down the slippery slope of scree) At Barafu you can take a good rest before tackling the rest of the way down. It is time to relax and think about your experiences of the past week. The way down to Mweka camp is a comfortable walk but rather dusty.

Mweka Camp

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Eight

Hike: 8.8km Altitude: 3040m-1620m 3-4 hours

Final opportunities to take pictures of your Maasai Wanderings Mountain Team - and on a clear morning, Kibo will loom large in the distance. We will also deal with the issue of tipping (ask for

suggested guidelines if you are unsure) and the team will send you off on your final stretch with our farewell 'Kili Song'. We set off down the last stage of the trek: some parts of the walk are very steep downhill and other stretches are very slippery so please be careful. Upon reaching the gate, we carry out sign-out formalities, the team load up the vehicles and the guides will present you with your certificates and then we are off for the transfer to Arusha.

At the lodge its time to take a warm shower, a quick nap and get some laundry done. We have also organised for a **full body massage** to assist your body in adapting back to normal after your strenuous adventures.

Karama Lodge

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day Nine

Transfer to Arusha departure point for journey beyond...

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Roughing It in Style!

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