

kilimanjaro summit climb - rongai route, tanzania



At 5,895m, Mt. Kilimanjaro is one of the largest volcanoes ever to break through the Earth's crust. Your challenge is to reach its summit!

The Rongai Route starts just south of the Kenya-Tanzania border and has been mostly unused for many years. Now open for climbing once again, experienced guides consider this ascent route to be both more manageable and more beautiful than the main Marangu Trail. The Rongai Route begins in attractive farmland and delightful forest, with the possibility of wildlife viewing and passing through several different climate zones, adding considerably to the interest of the trek.

Temperatures drop at night, allowing you to enjoy the crisp cool air under the star-studded African skies. During the days you will rise higher, often looking down on a sea of clouds. The expedition has been carefully planned to ensure that you acclimatise as much as possible to the altitude and your chances of making it to the summit are maximised.

The deviation to Mawenzi Tarn is very beautiful and on a little-used trail through moorland. This route retains a sense of unspoilt wilderness and offers a different perspective on Kilimanjaro by approaching it from the north.

The seven day itinerary gives excellent acclimatisation and also gives you an unusual view of the montane forest on Kilimanjaro. On the final night before the summit climb you shall need to rise at around midnight to

commence the final trek in the moonlight up the scree slopes to Gillman's point. Your aim is to reach this point by dawn and continue around the rim to the highest point, Uhuru Peak. This is likely to be the toughest day that most trekkers have ever experienced, involving 1,295m of ascent, 2,145m of descent.

Day 1: Depart from UK to Kenya

Our Charity Challenge representative will be at the airport to assist you with check-in and answer any last minute questions you may have.

Day 2: Transfer to Marangu

Subject to availability you will connect with an internal flight to Kilimanjaro airport or transfer overland across Kenya (approx 10-12hrs). If you transfer overland you will transfer by bus across Kenya to Namanga Border and once through the border into Tanzania you will continue your journey until you arrive at your hotel in Marangu. You have the rest of the day to relax and this evening you will have your briefing and kit check. Overnight and dinner in a hotel in Marangu.



Day 3: Forest trek (2,600m)

After breakfast you will drive to the Rongai National Park gate (approx 1 1/2hr drive) to complete the necessary registration formalities. The climb begins from the attractive traditional village of Nale Moru

(1,950m) on a small path that winds through fields of maize and potatoes before entering a pine forest. The track then starts to climb consistently but gently, through attractive rainforest that shelters a variety of wildlife, including the beautiful Kilimanjaro Colobus monkey. These monkeys are black with a long 'cape' of white hair and a flowing white tail. The forest begins to thin out and the first camp is at the edge of the moorland zone (2,600m) with extensive views over the Kenyan plains. Dinner and overnight at Rongai One camp. Approx. 3-4hours trekking; 650m altitude gain.



Day 4: Kikelewa Caves (3,600m)

Today is an early start as a tough day lies ahead! After breakfast you will head off and leave the main trail striking out across the moorland on a smaller path, towards the jagged peaks of Mawenzi. After a hot lunch you will continue to trek through the valleys and past the caves, seeing the unique vegetation of the area. Your campsite is in a sheltered valley with giant senecios near Kikelewa Caves at 3,600m (dinner and overnight). Approx. 7-8hrs trekking; 1000m altitude gain.

Day 5: Mawenzi Tarn (4,330m)

Early morning after breakfast there is short but steep climb up some grassy slopes which is rewarded by superb all round views and a tangible sense of wilderness. You will leave the vegetation behind shortly before reaching the next camp at Mawenzi Tarn (4,330m), spectacularly situated directly beneath the towering spires of Mawenzi. The afternoon will be free to rest or explore the surrounding area as an aid to acclimatisation. Dinner and overnight at Mawenzi Tarn campsite. Approx. 4-5hrs trekking; 600m altitude gain.

Day 6: Mawenzi Tarn (4,330m)

This morning you will be treated to a lie in! This morning you will have a short acclimatisation walk, up some steep scree slopes towards the peak of Mawenzi. On route you will visit the site of an old plane crash (at approximately 4,580m). After approximately 4 hours you will return to Mawenzi Tarn camp for lunch. The afternoon will be free to rest or explore the surrounding area to aid acclimatisation. Dinner and overnight at Mawenzi Tarn campsite. Approx. 4hrs walking; 250m altitude gain (though return to 4,330m).

Day 7: Kibo Crater (4,700m)

After breakfast you will trek across the lunar desert of the 'Saddle' between Mawenzi and Kibo to reach Kibo Campsite (4,700m) at the bottom of the Kibo crater-wall. After lunch, the remainder of the day is spent resting in preparation for the final ascent before a very early night! Dinner and overnight at Kibo campsite. Approx. 5-6hours trekking; 420m altitude gain.



Day 8: Summit Day (5,895m)

You will need to rise at around midnight (if you've managed to sleep!) to commence the trek up the scree slopes to Gillman's Point, continuing around the rim, passed Stella Point to the highest point; Uhuru Point. Be sure to wear all your layers of thermal clothing. It can seem mild at first; but as you reach the exposed ridges, wind chill causes the temperature to plummet. First light is around 0530hrs and this really gives you hope to push on upwards. You should reach Gillman's Point (5,685m, on the crater rim) just after dawn; then after a short rest continue for another hour or two round to Uhuru Point. After reaching Kilimanjaro's summit (5,895m) and having enjoyed the amazing views, you will then return, via Kibo, to Horombo (3,700m). You have a final camp meal and overnight at Horombo camp. This is the toughest day that most trekkers have ever experienced, with around 1,200m of ascent, nearly 2,200m of descent, and 11-16hrs trekking. However it is VICTORY DAY!

Day 9: Descend to Marangu Gate (1,800m)

Today you will set off early and walk down through the moorland to Mandara Hut (2,700m) and then on to Marangu Gate (1,800m). This is a long walk-off on a pretty gently sloping track that takes you from the lower heath into the rainforest and finally down to the National Park gate, from where you will be driven to your hotel in Marangu for a well-appreciated shower and celebratory dinner. Approx. 5-7hrs trekking; descent of 1,900m.

Day 10: Depart Tanzania to UK

This afternoon you will fly back to Nairobi airport (or transfer overland subject to flight availability) for your flight to the UK.

Day 11: Arrive Home

Arrive in the UK.

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Optional extensions:

Tarangire, Ngorongoro and Lake Manyara safari (5 days, 4 nights):

- Full Day Safari in Tarangire National Park with an overnight stay.
- Drive to Ngorongoro Crater (eighth wonder of the world). Picnic lunch in the crater and then afternoon of top class game viewing.
- Half Day visit to Lake Manyara offering a kaleidoscope of different species.

Please note you will have a 3 day safari, followed by a morning in Arusha and a flight back to the UK via Nairobi (subject to flight availability)



To find out more information about the extensions, visit the Kilimanjaro Summit Climb challenge page on our website or click on the “extensions” tab in your member’s area.

Zanzibar (5 days, 4 nights):

- Stay in the heart of Stone Town, on the picturesque seafront.
- Spend your days totally at leisure, relaxing on the beach or in the spa. Fishing, diving, snorkelling or day trips.
- Watch the stunning sunset, the aches and pains of summit night will be a distant memory.

Please note you will have 3 nights’ accommodation in Zanzibar. You will depart on day 4 to connect with the overnight flight to the UK (subject to flight availability).

