



MOUNT KILIMANJARO SHIRA ROUTE

If you are not accustomed to camping and mountain walking you could consider the Marangu Route as the most suitable. This follows easy angled paths through magnificent rain forests to the Mandara Hut. Shortly beyond it passes Maundi Crater, a fine view point located at the edge of the forest belt. Above you enter the moorlands with their fine giant heathers stands, groundsels, lobelia and other exotic tropical high altitude plants. The next hut is the Horombo Hut, soon after this hut you reach the Saddle, a high altitude desert separating the rugged Mawenzi summit from Kibo. The final ascent starts from the Kibo Hut and involves steep paths on loose scree. There is fresh running water at all the huts apart from Kibo where it will be carried by your porters. You will be accommodated generally in 4 person clean huts with mattresses.

The other routes are all more demanding as regards steepness and in places involve some scrambling. Accommodation is in tents and there is no running water at the campsites though warm water for washing is provided. The scenery more than compensates for these difficulties. Whichever route you choose it is essential to allow enough time for acclimatisation to the altitude. Although Mt. Kilimanjaro can be climbed throughout the year it is worth avoiding the two rainy seasons (late March to mid-June and October to the beginning of December) when the route becomes slippery. Probably the best time to visit is January to February and September to October when there is usually no cloud.

Mount Kilimanjaro (5895m) lies just 3 degrees south of the equator and is one of the highest volcanoes in the world. It rises some (4572m) above the surrounding plains and savannahs. The Kilimanjaro National Park covers some 1864 sq. Km. The base of this immense mountain has diameter of 80 Km (48 Miles) and the outstanding features are its three major volcanic centres: Shira (4160m) in the west. Mawenzi (5280m) to the east and the permanently snow-capped Kibo in the middle.

In climbing, the terrain passes from a tropical to an arctic climate in just a few days. The encircling rain forest ensures the fertility of the lower lying shambas and is rich in birdlife. Above the rain forest lies the Alpine Meadow, a beautiful moorland, offering many splendid views. Exotic plants such as the giant Lobelia and the fork-like Groundsel are to be seen. The latter blooming once every 50–70 years. Leaving the Alpine Meadow we reach the Alpine Desert and eventually the 'snows of Kilimanjaro'.



SHIRA ROURE

The Shira Plateau is one of the most fascinating and scenic areas on Kilimanjaro. It is well worth a visit just to explore the ridges and moorland. However, the road to Shira is only accessible by 4-wheel-drive vehicles and can become impassable during wet periods.

The drive to and from Shira offers magnificent views of the Great Rift Valley, studded with mountains. Among them Mt. Meru and Longido are especially prominent. The Shira zone of parasitic cones extends along to the north of the road, from plain to plateau. The vegetation changes along the track are striking. The plateau is grassland, heath and moor, with especially large senecios (up to 10 meters high) in valleys near the Cone. Elands can often be seen on the plateau, and you may see signs of buffaloes, leopards and other animals.

The Shira Cone rises about 200 meters above the plateau. Beyond it, to the west, is the Shira Ridge, a steep rise reaching almost 400 meters above plateau level at its trig point. The southern ridge of the Shira Plateau has two dramatic peaks called Cathedral and the Needle. Shira Route then Uhuru Point by the Arrow Glacier This is a really steep, hard but short route to the summit from Arrow Glacier Camp which is itself reached in about 4 hours from the Barranco Hut.

DAY	ITINERARY
Day 1	Arrive Moshi. Check into hotel for briefing and overnight.
Day 2	Drive to the National Park gate at Lindorossi on West Kilimanjaro. We commence the climb walking through the montane rain forest towards the Plateau. Lunch en route. Dinner and overnight at the camp site.
Day 3	After breakfast we continue walking towards the Shira Hut for lunch. The day is spent acclimatizing. A visit can be made to the Plats Cone on the ridge. Dinner and overnight at the camp site. Shira Hut (3926m).
Day 4	From the Shira Plateau we continue to the East passing the junction towards the peak of Kibo. As we continue our direction changes to South East towards the Lava Tower, called 'The Sharks Tooth) shortly after the tower we come to the second junction which brings us up to the arrow glacier. We have now reached an altitude of (4876 m). we now continue down to the Barranco hut at an altitude of (3860m) here we rest, enjoy dinner and camp overnight.
Day 5	After breakfast we leave Barranco and continue on a steep ridge passing the Barranco wall passing through the Karanga valley and the junction which connects with the Mweka trail. We continue to the Barafu hut which is located at an altitude of (4600m) here we make camp. Rest enjoy dinner and overnight. The two peaks of Mawenzi and Kibo are to be seen from this position.
Day 6	An early start for the ascent to the rim of the Kibo Crater between the Rebmann and Ratzel Glaciers, (4 hours); the last section before the rim can sometimes be snow-covered and an ice-axe or ski stick is useful for balance. From here a further hour leads to Uhuru Peak, from where there are often fine views of Meru to the west and the jagged peak of Mawenzi to the east. Descend to the Barafu Hut for a rest and lunch before continuing on down to camp at Mweka Hut in the giant heather zone on the forest edge. Those with energy on the summit may wish to descend to the Reutsh Crater and visit the dramatic ice pinnacles of the Eastern Icefields.
Day 7	After breakfast we continue the descent (3-4 hours) down to the Mweka Park gate and then drive back to Moshi. Overnight at hotel.
Day 8	Depart Moshi for after breakfast onward journey.