



MOUNT KILIMANJARO UMBWE ROUTE

This route is the hardest but most spectacular and direct way to reach Uhuru Peak. It follows a forested ridge to the moorlands, then traverses below the Southern Icefields to reach the Barafu Route which is followed to the summit. An early start is made on the summit day to reach Stella Point, on the Crater Rim at dawn. Uhuru Peak lies a further 40 minutes along the rim.

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. 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 centers: 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'.



UMBWE ROUTE

This route is the hardest but most spectacular and direct way to reach Uhuru Peak. Extra days can be added to our itinerary to explore or relax along the route or to camp in the Karanga River valley. Accommodation on the mountain is in tents; you will need a sleeping bag and mat. The porters will pitch the tents for you.

DAY	ITINERARY
Day 1	Arrive at hotel.
Day 2	Drive to the Umbwe Roadhead at 1800m. The route initially follows a forestry track winding up through the natural rain forest. It then narrows and steepens to climb the ridge between the Lonzo and Umbwe rivers. The first campsite is in the forest by some rock overhangs at 2940m, (5-6 hours walking).
Day 3	Shortly after leaving the camp the forest ends and the path continues along a narrow spectacular ridge. Above, the sheer 1000m of the Breach Wall appears and disappears as the afternoon mists roll up the Great Barranco. From the Umbwe ridge the route descends slightly to the Barranco Hut and our camp in the valley floor at 3900m, (5-6 hours walking).
Day 4	This is an acclimatization day at Barranco, walking around the greater Barranco and Breach wall with picnic lunch. Dinner and overnight at the camp site.
Day 5	A short scramble to the top of the Great Barranco and then a traverse over scree and ridges to the Karanga Valley (4000m, 3 hours), beneath the icefalls of the Heim, Kersten and Decken Glaciers. After climbing out of the Karanga Valley the trail ascends a ridge to the Barafu Hut, a bleak location with little vegetation at 4600m, (3 hours walking).
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. After a short time on the summit you 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 Mweka route. 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	A 3-4 hour descent through beautiful forest brings you to the Park gate and your waiting transport. Drive back to the hotel near Moshi.
Day 8	Leave hotel after breakfast.