



MOUNT KILIMANJARO RONGAI ROUTE

This remote and less frequently used route is the second easiest route to Kilimanjaro. The approach to the mountain is from the less-forested north side and the descent is by the Marangu Route. There are several variations, the one described below is a longer route taking in Mawenzi Tarn. The second day on this variant is quite long and could be broken up into two days walk allowing more time for acclimatisation. The ascent to Uhuru Peak is almost the same as for the Marangu Route from the Kibo Hut.

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 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”.



RONGAI ROUTE

The Rongai route begins on the northern side of the mountain and is the least travelled route. It is a long drive to the starting point but you are rewarded by fantastic views and the likelihood that you will be the only climbers around. If you take this route up the mountain you are obliged to descend via the Marangu Route that is the most popular and well-used route.

| DAY | ITINERARY |
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| Day 1 | Arrive Springlands Hotel in Moshi where you will overnight in preparation for your climb the next day. |
| Day 2 | After breakfast we will transfer you to Rongai. The climb begins from the attractive wooden village of Nale Moru (1950m) on a small path that winds through fields of maize and potatoes before entering pine forest. The track then starts to climb consistently, but gently through attractive forest 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 (2600m) with extensive views over the Kenyan plains (3-4 hours walking). |
| Day 3 | The morning walk is a steady ascent up to the 'Second Cave' (3450m) with superb views of Kibo and the Eastern icefields on the crater rim. After lunch, we leave the main trail and strike out across the moorland on a smaller path towards the jagged peaks of Mawenzi. Our campsite is in a sheltered valley with giant senecios near Kikelewa Caves (3600m) (6-7 hours walking). |
| Day 4 | A short but steep climb up grassy slopes is rewarded by superb allround views and a tangible sense of wilderness. We leave vegetation behind shortly before reaching the next camp at Mawenzi Tarn (4,330m), spectacularly situated in a cirque directly beneath the towering spires of Mawenzi. The afternoon will be free to rest or explore the surrounding area as an aid to acclimatisation (3-4 hours walking). |
| Day 5 | We cross the lunar desert of the 'Saddle' between Mawenzi and Kibo to reach School campsite (4750m) at the bottom of the Kibo crater wall. The remainder of the day is spent resting in preparation for the final ascent before a very early night. (4-5 hours walking). |
| Day 6 | We will start the final, and by far the steepest and most demanding, part of the climb by torchlight around 1 a.m. We plod very slowly in the darkness on a switchback trail through loose volcanic scree to reach the crater rim at Gillman's Point (5,685 m.) We will rest there for a short time to enjoy the spectacular sunrise over Mawenzi. Those who are still feeling strong can make the three hour round trip to Uhuru Peak (5,896m) passing close to the spectacular glaciers and ice cliffs that still occupy most of the summit area. The descent to Kibo (4,700m) is surprisingly fast and, after some refreshment, we continue the descent to reach our final campsite at Horombo (3,720m) (11-15 hours walking). |
| Day 7 | A steady descent takes us down through moorland to Mandara Hut (2,700m), the first stopping place at the Marangu route. We then continue descending through lovely lush forest on a good path to the National Park gate at Marangu (1,830m) 5-6 hours walking. You will be transferred to a hotel in Moshi for overnight. |
| Day 8 | Depart hotel after breakfast. |