THE MARANGU ROUTE

KILIMANJARO EXPERTS







*The Marangu Route is the original trail on Kilimanjaro, and the one that follows most closely (though not that closely) Hans Meyer's original hike to the summit in 1889. This **73.1km/45.5-mile trail** is undoubtedly gorgeous, though it does have a couple of significant drawbacks: it has the lowest success rate for getting people to the summit, and it's the only trail where you take the same path down as you did going up. In other words, you see the same scenery twice.*

Having said that, this is the only trail where you get to sleep in huts, rather than under canvas - which will be very attractive to some people. And there are a couple of alternative trails, so you don't have to walk on exactly the same trail twice. Plus, it really is absolutely beautiful in places.

Possible variations and options on this itinerary

- **You can also book a private trek**, allowing you to choose the exact date you start your climb.
- If requested in advance, it's possible to **climb to the summit during the daytime**, allowing you to make the most of the views - and avoid the crowds too.
- Add an extra day and you can **sleep in the crater** and explore the glaciers and other features of the summit.
- The trail can actually be completed in five days but we offer this trek only for **six or seven days** - five days, in our opinion, is dangerously short.

Six-day itinerary

Day 1 Arusha to Marangu Gate then trek to Mandara Huts
Day 2 Mandara Huts to Horombo Huts
Day 3 Rest day; day hike to Zebra Rocks and return
Day 4 Horombo Huts to Kibo Huts
Night 4 Kibo Huts to Summit
Day 5 Summit to Horombo Huts
Day 6 Horombo Huts to Marangu Gate



THE MARANGU ROUTE: ESSENTIAL PRE-TREK INFORMATION

KILIMANJARO EXPERTS

These are ***brief*** answers to some of the more popular questions from our climbers. More comprehensive answers can be found in the **guide book**, or on the websites **www.climbmountkilimanjaro**.com and **kilimanjaroexperts.com**. Remember, too, that you can always **send us an email** with your queries, or arrange to chat with us over **WhatsApp** or **Zoom**.

What money should I bring?

Bring credit/debit cards, which is the safest way to carry money (but not all places accept them) *and* some US dollars cash, which are accepted in most places (but make sure they were printed after 2016). The local currency is the Tanzanian shilling, but don't get too many of these as you'll get a lousy rate if you have to change them back again at the end of the trip.

Should I get Insurance?

Insurance is not compulsory but we strongly advise you to buy some, for both medical and baggage insurance. Make sure the insurance covers you for trekking up to 6000m; if it also includes helicopter rescue, so much the better.

Do I need a visa?

Most nationalities need a visa for Tanzania. You can either pick one up online before you arrive at visa.immigration.go.tz, though make sure you apply at least two weeks before you're due to arrive. Or pick one up from Kilimanjaro Airport on arrival. The price for either method is US$50, or US$100 for US citizens.

How do I get to Kilimanjaro?

Kilimanjaro Airport is the nearest international airport to our base in Arusha, and we provide airport transfers from there to your hotel. Arusha Airport is actually closer, but is for domestic flights only. You can also fly to Nairobi in Kenya, and catch a six-hour shuttle bus (or fly) from there.

When should I arrive in Tanzania?

We advise you to arrive at least 24 hours prior to departure. True, it may mean paying for an extra night in a hotel - but it also gives you plenty of time to rest and recover from your flight, and prepare for the adventure ahead.

What inoculations do I require?

Tetanus, polio, and hepatitis are all recommended. Malaria tablets too, are taken by most travellers and are vital if you're heading to Zanzibar; though you can't catch malaria on Kili. The only compulsory jab you *may* need is yellow fever; we can help you determine if you need it or not.

Can I rent clothing and other items?

Yes - you can rent pretty much everything from us except thermal underwear and boots.

What plugs do they use in Tanzania?

Tanzania is powered by a 250V, 50 cycles, AC network. Plugs and sockets vary in style, though by far the most common are the British three-square-pin sockets (see picture).



THE MARANGU ROUTE ITINERARY

KILIMANJARO EXPERTS

Can I leave some luggage behind?

You don't need to bring all your luggage with you on Kilimanjaro - just the clothing and items you'll actually need for the trek. Anything you don't require - clothing you brought specifically for your safari, for example - you can leave behind at the hotel.

If it's valuable (for example, your passport or money), ask reception to put it in their safe and ask for a receipt. And if, for some reason, you don't trust the hotel's security, just ask your guide at the briefing if you can leave it at our office - it won't be a problem.

Who will be your crew?

On every trek there is at least one guide for every two climbers.

There will also be a cook and *lots* of porters - around 3 per climber, and more if you're a small group. The guides will all speak good English, as will some of the more talented porters. But try to communicate with all your crew, even if it's just to offer a sweet or two to them on the trail.

It makes for a happier and more rewarding climb if you do.

DAY 1: Transfer to Marangu Gate; trek from Marangu Gate to Mandara Huts

Breakfast at your hotel is usually served from 7am. Please ensure that you have packed your bags before breakfast, have signed over your extra luggage that will not be required on the mountain to reception, and have deposited your valuables into the hotel's safe.

Transfer and Registration: You will normally be collected at 8-10am from your hotel; your guide may be able to give you a more precise time during the pre-trek briefing.

Your driver will transfer you for around 3-4 hours to Marangu Gate (1905m) where we complete registration formalities. On the way you'll stop at Usa River, where we have our office, and you can shop for last-minute supplies (batteries etc).

Following any transfer it is customary to tip the driver; around US10 per group is usual. You should have your passport number with you for registering with the park. Lunch is served at the gate.



THE MARANGU ROUTE ITINERARY

KILIMANJARO EXPERTS





What will you wear each day on the mountain?

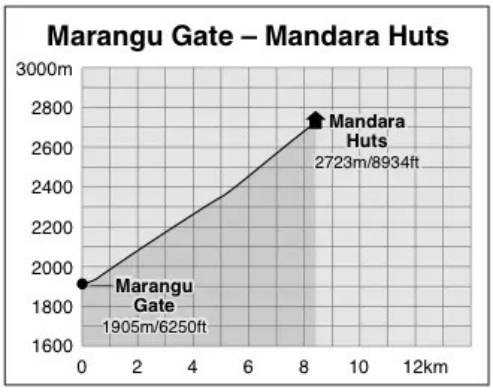
It's impossible to tell you exactly what you need to wear each day on Kili, as everybody feels the cold differently. But *always* take your waterproofs with you in your daypack when trekking. And don't worry - you'll soon work out what you need to wear day by day.

Usually on the first day people wear shorts and T-shirts when trekking through the forest; though in camp at the end of the day, once the sun goes down, it's already cold enough that you will want to put on your summit jacket.

For a list of clothing and equipment to bring, please see our Climb Mount Kilimanjaro website (www.climbmountkilimanjaro.com)

The trek

This 8.3km/5.25-mile first day takes us deep into the jungle bearding Kilimanjaro's lower slopes. Keep an eye out for the beautiful colobus monkeys, as well as blue monkeys and the shy but numerous tree hyraxes. We'll also see some of the flowers for which Kilimanjaro is famed, and in which the Marangu Route excels. Flowers such as the vivid red *Gladiolus Wastonides* and the mountain's most famous flower, the delicate *Impatiens kilimanjarii*.



Having taken lunch in a small clearing known as **Kisamboni**, we continue up the slopes past small waterfalls alongside a babbling stream, to the **Mandara Huts**, our accommodation for the first night. Those with the energy can take a brief stroll with our guide to the **Maundi Crater**. This is home to some of the lesser-known flowers on Kilimanjaro, and a place that offers stunning views east towards Mombasa and the Indian Ocean. Alternatively, we can simply sit, relax and reflect on the first day while our crew, as they will on every day of the trek, cook our evening meal.



THE MARANGU ROUTE ITINERARY





What will you eat on the mountain?

You will be served three hot meals a day on Kili. You will also be served a snack - usually popcorn and biscuits - upon arriving at camp at the end of each day.

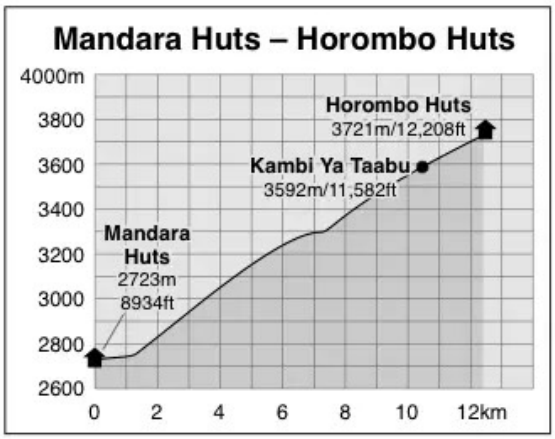
All we ask is that you tell us of any dietary requirements you may have. *All* diets can be catered for, including vegetarian and vegan, as well as those who suffer from allergies and intolerances.

As long as we know beforehand, we'll devise a menu *for you*.

For sample menus, visit Kilimanjaro Experts website (search for 'food').

DAY 2: Mandara Huts to Horombo Huts

Today's **12.5km/7.75 miles** is an important one in your Kilimanjaro trek. It's a day when we climb above the tree-line and leave the forest behind. It's also the day when we catch our first sight of both Mawenzi, Kili's second summit, *and* its snow-covered bigger brother, Kibo – our ultimate destination!



Today is also the day that we start to really pace ourselves, taking each step slowly, to help us acclimatise to the increasingly rarified air. We are now in the heath and moorland zone, Kilimanjaro's second vegetation zone. We'll see unusual plants as the giant groundsel and *Lobelia deckenii* decorating the path.

Our destination on this second day is the **Horombo Huts** (3721m), a chilly but welcoming set of A-Frame huts offering glimpses of Kibo to the west. Popcorn and a hot drink will be served to us upon arrival, followed by dinner in the evening.



THE MARANGU ROUTE ITINERARY

KILIMANJARO EXPERTS

What are the campsites like on Kilimanjaro?

We try to make our climbers as comfortable as possible on Kili. **Solo trekkers are given their own private tents** (designed for two people) at no extra cost.

If you are two people, you'll be given a tent designed for three people. These tents also have vestibules at the front, allowing you to remove boots under shelter and keep the sleeping area clean. Similarly, the camping mats we supply are thick, warm and very comfortable.

We also provide private **toilet tents** (one for every four climbers), so there's no need to use the (sometimes horrific) public toilets at the campsites.

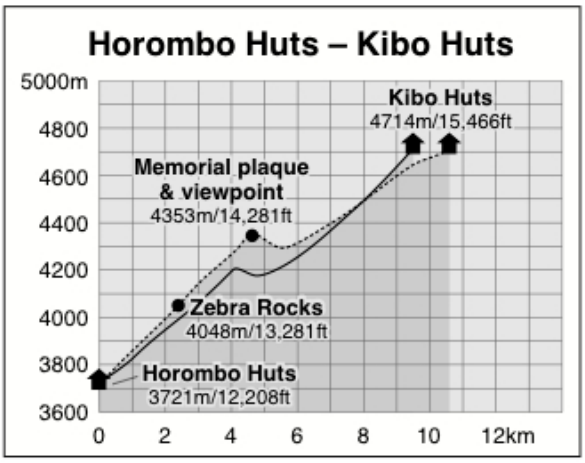
Each trek is also equipped with a **mess tent**, so you have somewhere to eat and socialise rather than spending all your time in your tent.

For **washing**, we provide a bowl of hot water and some soap both in the morning, and at the end of the day's trek.

Do note that while we do our best to make you as comfortable as we can, we *have* to stay in public campsites and they can, on occasion, be noisy, dilapidated, and decorated with litter.

Day 3: Rest day - acclimatisation hike to Zebra Rocks

Just because we call this a rest day doesn't mean we actually rest! Instead, today's walk takes us up the **southern slopes of Mawenzi**, to get some of the best views of Kibo to be had anywhere, as well as a gorgeous panorama overlooking the wild and inhospitable desert of the Saddle.



We also visit places such as the strange **Zebra Rocks**. This rocky ridge has been coloured over the centuries by water and now resemble a zebra's flanks.

This day is not just about sightseeing, however, for the rest day serves a more important purpose than that: helping our bodies to acclimatize fully, to make the rest of the trek easier – and hopefully help us to reach the summit too!



THE MARANGU ROUTE ITINERARY

KILIMANJARO EXPERTS

How we keep you safe on Kilimanjaro

Safety is our number one priority on Kilimanjaro. And we go the extra mile to keep you as safe and healthy as we can.

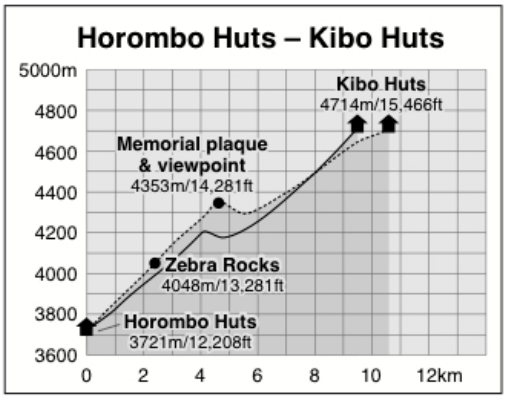
Our guides are amongst the most experienced and talented on the mountain. Most also have the international **Wilderness First Responder** qualification.
Each trek will also be equipped with a **comprehensive first-aid medical kit.** The guides also carry **oxygen** for those people who are suffering from altitude sickness – though this is very much a last resort and the guides are trained to spot altitude sickness *before* it becomes necessary to use oxygen.

On the mountain our guides complete a **Lake Louise** AMS appraisal for each climber every day. (You can read more about this on our website.)

In addition, they also carry a **pulse oximeter** which they will use at least daily on each trekker to see how well your blood is absorbing oxygen.

Day 4: Horombo Huts to Kibo Huts

The scenery once again changes on today's 9.5km/6-mile trek as we leave just about all vegetation behind to enter the windswept wilderness of the **Saddle**. This is the high-altitude desert separating Kilimanjaro's twin peaks of Kibo and Mawenzi. That doesn't mean that the day is not without interest, however. The beauty of the desert is undeniable. The light is usually very clear, too, and we'll be wanting to get out our cameras every few seconds. There are also enough features on the way, including some weird and wonderful **parasitic craters**, to take our mind off the exhaustion we may now be feeling.



Our goal on this third day is the **Kibo Huts**, set at the foot of the summit of the same name. Attractively built in stone, and with the occasional mountain buzzard soaring overhead for company, we'll spend the rest of the day sleeping and eating in preparation for the night ahead…



THE MARANGU ROUTE ITINERARY

KILIMANJARO EXPERTS

What you carry on your trek, and what you give to your porter

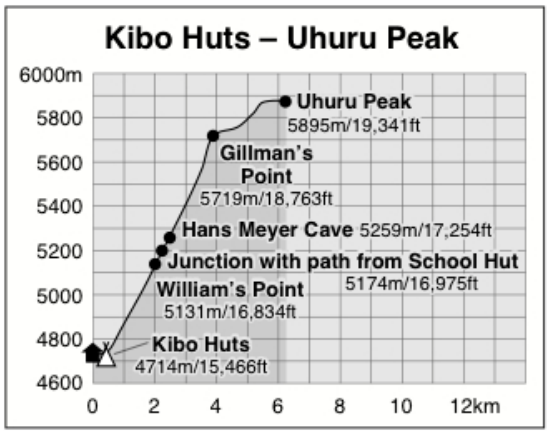
On the mountain, most of your luggage is carried by a porter. We set a maximum of 15kg that you can give to him. That's enough for nearly all our climbers, but if you have significantly more gear then you may need to hire an extra porter, at a cost of US$12 per day.

You do, however, have to carry a daypack (around 30 litres capacity) with items that you may need while you are walking. These items may include:

- Water (around 3-4 litres)
- Camera
- Sweets and snacks
- Spare film/memory cards/ batteries
- Your valuables
- Phone
- Battery pack/charger
- A sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Suncream
- Toilet paper (and trowel)
- Rainwear
- Walking sticks/poles
- Knee supports
- Medication
- Chapstick
- Our guide book/maps
- Buff/bandanna
- A light fleece

NIGHT 4: The summit attempt

Around midnight of Day 4 (our guide will judge the time that is optimal for us based on our pace thus far) we quit the huts for the assault via Gillman's Point (5719m/18,763ft) to the summit, **6.25km/4 miles** away.



Avoiding loose scree slopes above Kibo Hut, we ascend from School Hut (4717m/15,476ft) via Hans Meyer Cave (5259m/ 17,254ft) and Gillman's Point (5719m)/18,763ft), to **Uhuru Peak** (5895m/ 19,341ft). When we reach Gillman's Point we will sit and rest. At this point you may believe that you have already exhausted your reserves in reaching this far, this is very unlikely to be so.

(Continued on next page.)



THE MARANGU ROUTE ITINERARY

KILIMANJARO EXPERTS

How to avoid altitude sickness: a few tips

1) **Walk slowly** Emulate the deliberate, careful tread of an elderly, cautious elephant. Or a jaunty tortoise. The guide will set a deliberately slow pace and remind you to go *pole pole* ('slowly slowly'). Follow their lead and you'll give your body more time to get used to the rarified air.

2) **Drink plenty** Aim for at least three litres per day. We provide you with fresh, clean, purified and boiled water, as well as hot drinks in camp.

3) **Eat well** Don't worry, it's unlikely you'll gain weight on your trek, so tuck in!

4) **Take as long as you can** Six days minimum, seven better, eight best!

5) **Climb up to high altitude before you arrive** If you've got a mountain in your back garden, now's the time to climb it. And if you haven't, then why not tackle Meru, Kili's little brother?

6) **Choose your trekking company carefully** You can read reviews of all the major trekking companies in our guide book. Or save yourself the time and effort - and go with the Experts!



Please trust our guide; he or she is very adept at judging whether your condition will allow safe progress or whether you have succumbed to a potentially dangerous condition and to proceed will not be safe. Remember, too, that from Gillman's we are only 2km/1.25 miles and 176 vertical metres/578ft short of the summit, the journey from here is much less steep - and we have lots of time. The path takes us around the Crater rim, with the crater itself on our right-hand side and the sun rising behind Kili's second summit, Mawenzi, to our left.

Don't be too disheartened by the many false summits we will encounter along the last part after Stella Point. Instead, distract your mind from the pain and exhaustion by looking at the huge and beautiful icefields to our left and the sheer, desolate enormity of the crater on our right. A gorgeous dawn at the summit, and a certificate back at Mweka Gate, are the prizes that await...

On the summit our guide will advise how much time we can spend there in consideration of our condition, our timings, and the weather. The brain does not function very intelligently at this altitude so please remember to take many photographs in all directions or you will probably regret not having done so at a later stage. *(Continued on next page.)*

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KILIMANJARO EXPERTS

What wildlife can you see on the Marangu Route?

As with all routes on Kili, you'll be lucky to see much wildlife other than the odd monkey or mouse during your climb.

That said, because it's quieter than other routes, so the Rongai Route gives you a better chance of seeing something more exotic.

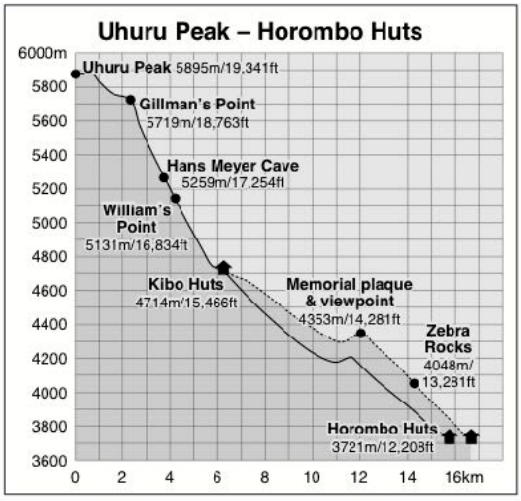
Buffalo, elephant, eland and various species of antelope and gazelle all, occasionally, make their way up from Kenya's Amboseli National Park. Serval cats also live on the slopes, and you'll often see their footprints crossing the trail.

Thankfully, the **birdlife** on Kilimanjaro is more visible. White-necked ravens scavenge around the campsites, lammergeier soar above the moorlands and desert, while the forest is home to hornbill, trogon, montane white-eye and many, many other species.

In the guide book that all climbers receive we provide a fairly thorough overview of the animals, birds and **plants** that call the mountain their home.

Day 5: Uhuru Peak to Horombo Huts

Few people remain at the summit for long: weariness, the risk of hypothermia and the thought of a steaming mug of Milo at the Kibo Huts, 6.25km/4 miles from the summit, are enough to send most people scurrying back down. There are **two main ways** of doing this: the **first** is to follow exactly the course from Gillman's that we took getting up here, carefully retracing every zig and zag like somebody who has dropped a contact lens on the way up but can't quite remember when or where. It is precisely those people who are in greatest need of getting down fast who usually use this slower method to descend.



The **second way** is to cut straight through the switchbacks and simply head vertically downwards in a sort of ski-style, using the now defrosted scree to act as a brake on your momentum as you push against it with the soles of your boots, heels first. After the tedium of the previous night's *pole pole*, heel-to-toe exercise, the sheer abandon of this method and the rapid progress made – it takes just over 90 minutes to travel from Gillman's to the huts this way – comes as something of a relief.

Take care, however: far more people are injured going down than going up. Furthermore, do remember that every year at least 20,000 pairs of feet tread on this part of the mountain and, at the risk of sounding like a killjoy, pushing down all that scree cannot be doing the mountain any good.

Indeed, may we politely request that you use this faster method only if you need to descend rapidly? Otherwise, stick to the switchbacks which will be far less damaging to the mountain – and safer too. *(Continued on next page.)*

THE MARANGU ROUTE ITINERARY

KILIMANJARO EXPERTS

Tipping your Kilimanjaro crew

When you receive my guide book and start to read it, you'll see that I dislike the whole process of tipping on Kilimanjaro. Many trekkers become worried about whether they've brought enough money, and what's the right way to distribute it.

We also think that it's wrong that trekkers have to carry US$300-400 with them up Kili, particularly as there have been thefts in the past.

However, I do also recognise that though we pay our crews some of the best wages on the mountain, the porters still need the extra boost that tips provide to help them and their families thrive.

At Kilimanjaro Experts we make things as simple as possible for our climbers, while still obeying the strict criteria set out by KPAP (the porters' charity that looks after the welfare of porters).

With our process, which we'll take you through step-by-step during the booking process, you don't need to take any money onto the mountain with you, we advise you how much to bring - and we help you distribute it fairly too

Upon returning to Kibo Huts, our guide should allow us to rest for an hour before moving on across the desert of the Saddle to the **Horombo Huts**, 9.6km/6 miles away. Expect it to take 3¼ hours from Kibo Huts.

Since setting off from School Huts last night we've walked over 20km (12 miles)**.** Doesn't sound *that* much, does it? But we've also gained 1178m/3865ft in altitude, followed by a loss of 3174m/10,413ft. And that should ensure we'll be feeling exhausted by the end of today.



THE MARANGU ROUTE ITINERARY

KILIMANJARO EXPERTS

What is it actually like to climb Kilimanjaro?

Fun. It really is. Your days are spent walking through spectacular landscapes which change every day as you pass through different vegetation zones.

Nor is pace ever exhausting, as you have to walk slowly in order to give yourself a chance to acclimatise.

Of course, trekking up from less than 2000m or thereabouts to 5895m does, as you can probably imagine, take a lot of effort and the final hike to the summit is unarguably tough.

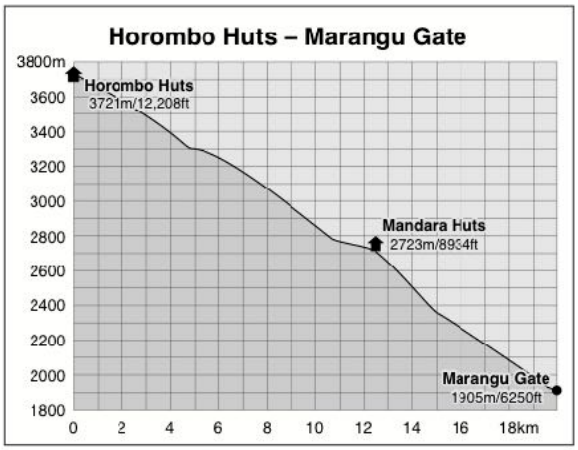
But over the course of the trek, a sense of camaraderie between your fellow climbers inevitably develops and you'll be willing each other to succeed.

Then there's your crew, who will do everything in their power to make your entire experience as comfortable as possible.

With your fellow trekkers by your side and all your crew encouraging you to succeed and help you wherever they can, all you have to do is your best - and concentrate on making it to the top!

Day 6: Horombo Huts to Marangu Gate

Today's distance is **20.8km/13 miles** along very well maintained trails (Horombo to Mandara is 12.5km/7.75 miles and Mandara to Marangu Gate is 8.3km/5.25 miles). Don't be in too much of a hurry to finish your trekking, for today holds lots of treats for those who take the time to enjoy them. This is the first time you will have seen forest so thick and vast on Kilimanjaro, and it's worth taking the time to appreciate the different flora on this side of the mountain.



Arriving at Marangu Gate at around 1300-1600, you are collected and transferred to Moshi for lunch, then to Arusha. Your Kilimanjaro trek is at an end.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions on this itinerary.

Henry Stedman

