THE EIGHT-DAY OFFICIAL LEMOSHO ROUTE

KILIMANJARO EXPERTS







The Lemosho Route is a 7- to 8-day yomp that takes you through the remote and pristine cloud forest of West Kilimanjaro and across the Shira Plateau to the highest point in Africa - and back down again. It has the longest official ascent route on Kilimanjaro at 46.96km/29 miles, which gives you both a great overall view of the mountain and an excellent chance to acclimatise safely. No wonder its popularity has exploded over the past two years!

Possible variations and options on this itinerary

- The Lemosho Route is usually booked **as a private trek**, as most of our climbers prefer to climb on our own Alternative Lemosho Route. Do compare the two before deciding on a route.
- 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 ice fields, glaciers and other features of the summit.
- The route can be completed in **seven days** if you're short of time (and it's cheaper than an eight-day climb too.)
- While most trekkers trek around the southern slopes to ascend to the summit via Barafu, it is possible to ascend via the more direct (but dangerous) **Western Breach**.

Itinerary at a glance

Day 1 Arusha to Mti Mkubwa (Big Tree Camp)
Day 2 Mti Mkubwa to Shira 1
Day 3 Shira 1 to Shira 2
Day 4 Shira 2 Camp to Barranco Camp
Day 5 Barranco Camp to Karanga Campsite
Day 6 Karanga Camp to Barafu Camp
Night 6 To the summit!
Day 7 Summit to Millennium/ Mweka Camp
Day 8 Millennium/Mweka to Arusha



THE EIGHT-DAY OFFICIAL LEMOSHO 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).



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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 will be at least one guide for every two climbers.

There will also be a cook and *lots* of porters - around 3 per climber, more if you are 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 will make for a happier and more rewarding climb if you do.

DAY 1: Transfer to Lemosho Glades; trek from Lemosho Glades to Mti Mkubwa Camp

Breakfast at your hotel is 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 120km and 3 hours to Lemosho Glades where we complete registration formalities. On the way you'll stop at Usa River, where we have our office, and where you can shop for last-minute supplies (batteries etc). The final drive up the lower slopes of Kili can be treacherous depending on weather and road conditions, and there is a small risk of being jolted inside the vehicle. 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.



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What will you wear each day on the mountain?

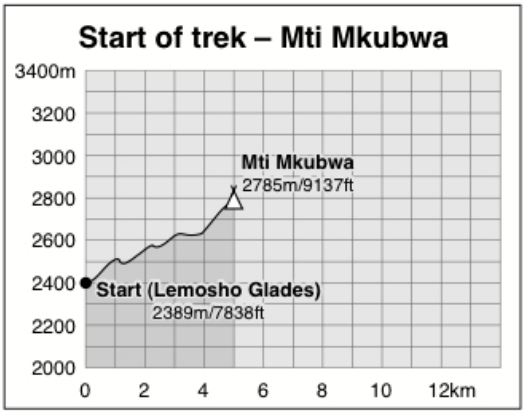
It's impossible to tell you exactly what you need to wear each day on Kili, as everybody feels the cold differently. But *always* take your waterproofs with you in your daypack when trekking. And don't worry - you will soon work out what you need to wear each day.

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. From the second day *most* people wear long trousers and a shirt/T-shirt when walking.

For a list of clothing and equipment to bring, please see our website.

The trek

From Lemosho Start Point (2389m/7838ft) to Big Tree Camp (2785m/9137ft) the distance is just **4.8km/3 miles**, and just under 400m of elevation gain. The whole of the first day's trek is spent in some of the most pristine and beautiful forest to be found anywhere on the mountain. Encounters with wildlife on this trail are slightly greater than other routes and we should also see the beautiful red *impatiens Kilimanjarii* flower, one of the great emblems of the mountain.



Our first day ends at **Mti Mkubwa**, the **Big Tree Camp** (2785m/9137ft), where, as with every night on the trek, we will arrive to find our tent already erected and a snack awaiting. A full dinner follows before we settle down to sleep to the sounds of the forest, with monkeys, hyrax and the noisy turaco bird breaking the silence in this most blissful of locations, underneath the spreading branches of a beautiful old podocarpus tree.



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What will you eat on the mountain?

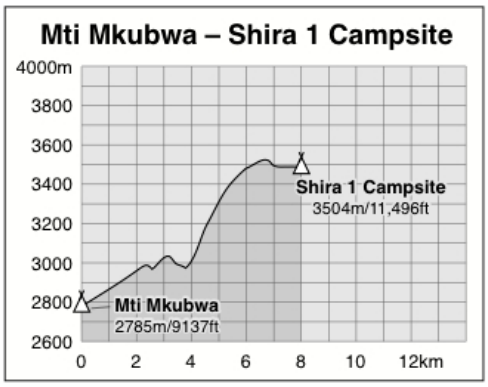
You will be served three hot meals a day on Kilimanjaro. You will also be served a snack - usually popcorn and biscuits - upon arriving at camp at the end of each day.

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 in advance, we can devise a menu *for you*.

For sample menus, visit the Kilimanjaro Experts website.

DAY 2: Trek from Big Tree Camp to Shira 1 Camp on the edge of the Shira Plateau

This second, **7.9km-long (5 miles)** day, the most varied on the trek, starts off with a continuation of yesterday's march through the forest. Before long, however, we leave the trees behind to enter the grasses and wild flowers of the Heath and Moorland zone.



Already our guide will have started to set a deliberately slow pace in order to help us acclimatise to the lack of available oxygen at this altitude. Still climbing, we eventually round the northern slopes of the Shira Ridge – Kili's little-known third summit – and pause to admire the first proper view of our ultimate destination: the magnificent snow-covered Kibo summit. Descending a short distance, we arrive at our next campsite, the **Shira One Campsite** (3504m/11,496ft), on the western edge of the Shira Plateau, with views across the plateau to Kibo.



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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. All tents 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.

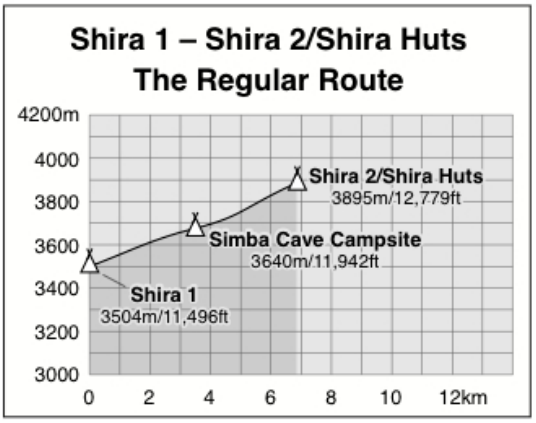
We also provide private **toilet tents** (one for every four climbers), so there's no need to use the (sometimes horrific) public toilets at the campsites. Each trek is also equipped with a **mess tent**, so you have somewhere to eat and socialise rather than spending all your time in your sleeping tent.

For **washing**, we provide a bowl of hot water and a bar of soap first thing in the morning, and at the end of the day's trekking.

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: Shira 1 to Shira 2/Shira Huts Camp

For this **10.1km (6.25 miles)** third day we could just cut a straight path across the plateau towards Kibo, but if we have the energy a wonderful morning can be spent exploring some of the features of the Shira Ridge, including the Cathedral, from where we get great views across the plateau towards Kibo and along the southern slopes of Kilimanjaro. It is also extremely useful for acclimatization as we climb steadily to 3862m/12,671ft, where we take lunch, before descending back to the plateau. We then continue east towards Kibo, passing the end of the emergency road, eventually reaching the **Shira Huts Campsite** (3895m/12,779ft) at the heart of the plateau.





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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 have the international **Wilderness First Responder** qualification. Each trek will also be equipped with a **comprehensive first-aid medical kit.**

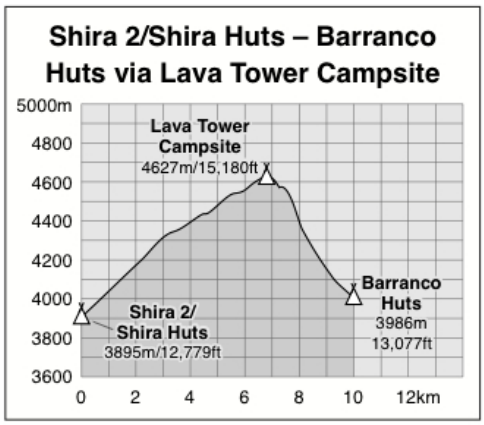
The guides also carry **oxygen** for those people who are suffering from altitude sickness – though this is very much a last resort and the guides are trained to spot altitude sickness *before* it becomes necessary to use oxygen.

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: Shira 2/Shira Huts Campsite to Barranco Huts Campsite

This **10.1km/6.25 miles** day begins with a slow march directly towards Kibo. The flora becomes more scarce now as we climb ever higher, with only a few everlastings, like living *pot pourri*, decorating the path. It's a long walk but a very photogenic one with the snowy summit of Kilimanjaro a constant looming presence ahead. Lunch this time is taken near the Lava Tower, at the foot of Kibo. We are now heading into some serious altitude, with Lava Tower standing at 4627m/15,180ft above sea level. For this reason, it is normal for people to have a slight headache when they finally reach our campsite for the evening, busy **Barranco Camp**, lying at the end of a steep descent to 3986m/13,077ft.





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

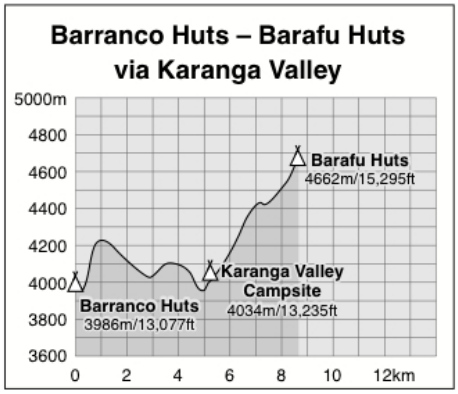
On the mountain, most of your luggage is carried by a porter. We set a maximum of 15kg that you can give to him. That's enough for nearly all our climbers, but if you have significantly more gear then you may need to hire an extra porter, at a cost of US$12 per day.

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

Day 5: Barranco Huts to Karanga Camp

This short **5.5km/3.5-mile** day begins with the steepest section of the entire trek as we spend the first hour or so climbing the Breakfast Wall. From here the path meanders down across valleys and scree slopes as we traverse the southern slopes of Kibo, before a steep drop brings us to the floor of the flora-rich Karanga Valley. Though our destination for the night shares its name with this beautiful valley, it actually lies a stiff 20-minute climb up out of the valley. At the **Karanga Camp** (4034m/ 13,235ft) we should, as usual, find our tents already set up, and a snack of popcorn, biscuits and hot drinks awaiting. Lunch and dinner will both be served at this exposed campsite.





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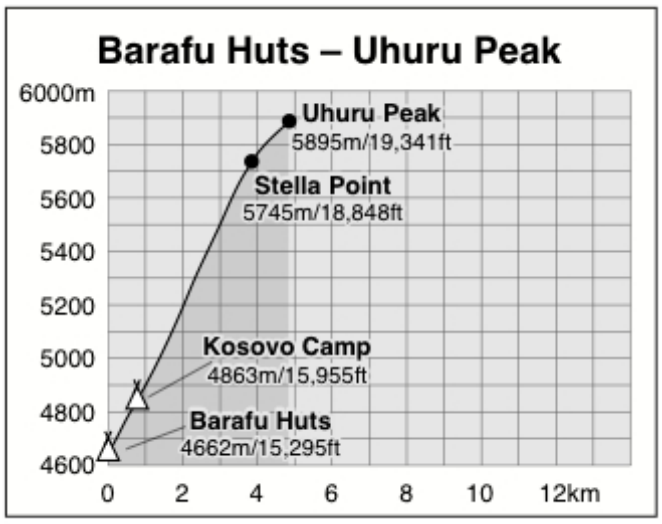
Day 6: Karanga Camp to Barafu Huts Campsite

Another short day of **3.7km/2.25 miles** as we traverse the southern side of Kibo, walking through a spectacular lunar landscape quite bereft of life as we go. Don't be fooled, however, for the initial walk from the camp is almost entirely uphill and quite relentless. Climbing onto a ridge, we reach chilly **Barafu Camp** (4662m/15,295ft) on the southeastern shoulder of Kibo. Here we will rest, take both lunch and dinner, and try to get some sleep before the rigours of the night ahead….

Night 6: Barafu Camp to summit

Arising at around midnight, we begin the **4.86km/3-mile** march up to **Stella Point** (5745m/18,848ft) on the edge of the Kibo crater. It's a steep, slow, cold march and a test of our endurance – this is where we'll earn our Kili certificate. Nevertheless, it is the easiest of the summit routes, and as long as we have avoided altitude sickness and have acclimatised well there is no reason why we shouldn't make it up to Stella.



This we reach, all being well, at around 5am, though it can be much later depending on our condition.

From Stella Point it is a mere 45 minutes further on, past glaciers and snowfields and with views over the Kibo Crater, to **Uhuru Peak** – at 5895m/19,341ft the highest point in Africa. Here, if we're on time, we can watch the sun rise over the African continent, take photos – and take a breather too!

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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 his 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 very 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!

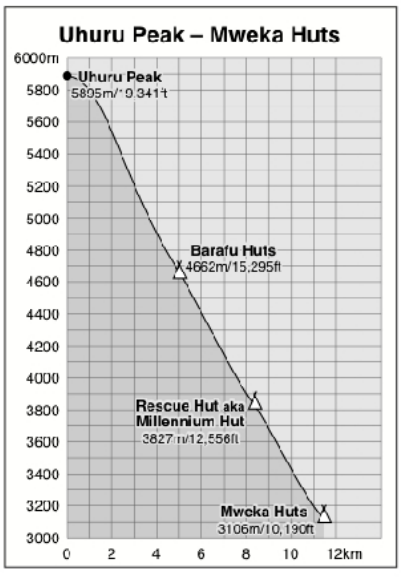
5) **Climb up to high altitude before you arrive** If you've got a mountain in your back garden, now's the time to climb it. And if you haven't, then why not tackle Meru, Kili's little brother?

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!



Day 7: Descent to Mweka Huts Campsite

After a rest at the top, we continue **4.86km/3 miles** back down to Barafu Camp – a walk that is considerably quicker than it was on the way up! At Barafu we take breakfast and relax for an hour, before continuing our march a further **6.6km/4.25 miles** down the mountain, this time on the Mweka Trail.



Today's walk takes us back down through the alpine desert, heath and moorland zones until we once more enter the forest zone.

There, amongst the trees, we find the **Mweka Huts** (3106m/10,190ft), our final stop on the trek. We should arrive there at about 4pm – and we have been walking for around 16 hours, less breaks!

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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.

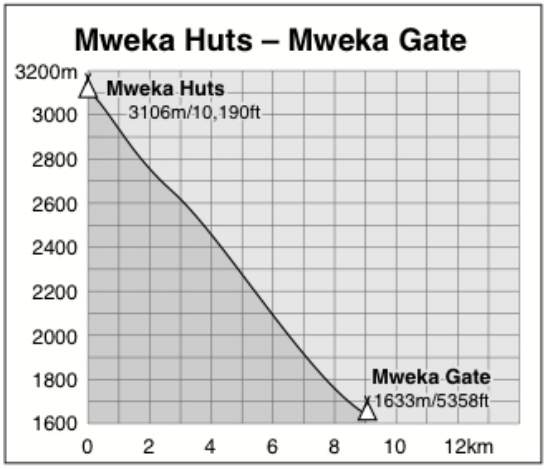
Of course, trekking up from less than 2000m or thereabouts to 5895m does, as you can probably imagine, take a lot of effort and the final hike to the summit is unarguably tough. But over the course of the trek, a sense of camaraderie between your fellow climbers inevitably develops and you'll be willing 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 8: Mweka Huts to Mweka Gate

It's just a few hours and **9.5km/6 miles** further now from the campsite through some spectacular cloud forest to **Mweka Gate** (1633m/5358ft) where those who made it to the summit or Stella Point will collect their certificates. A car will be waiting to take us back to our hotels, and a land of warm showers and cold beers. Our trek is at an end.



Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions about this itinerary.

Henry Stedman
(Altitudes are based on those in the current edition of the Kilimanjaro guide book.)

