

Mt Kilimanjaro Climb and Safari
Daily itinerary
February 15 - 28, 2007 (Friday-Thursday)

Day 0 (Feb 14) Leave U.S. for overnight flight

Day 1 (Feb 15) Arrive at Kilimanjaro International Airport (JRO) where we are transported to the hotel. Overnight in Marangu at the Marangu Resort.

Day 2 (Feb 16) Today we will visit the Shira Tumaini women's cooperative and learn about their history and the projects they are working on. This will enhance our understanding of the local culture rather than just the tourist version and proceeds go to benefit their work. Overnight at Marangu Resort.

Day 3 (Feb 17) Today we drive from Marangu to Machame Gate. After the initial pre-trip preparation, we leave the park gate and walk through the rain forest on a winding trail up a ridge. Lower down, the trail can be muddy and slippery and gaiters and trekking poles are a good idea here. We continue a short distance until we reach the Machame Camp. (6000 to 10,200 ft, 5-7 hours).

Day 4 (Feb 18) After breakfast, we leave the glades of the rain forest and continue on an ascending path, crossing a little valley and walking along a steep rocky ridge, covered with heather, until the ridge ends. The route now turns west into a river gorge. Time for rest, dinner, and overnight at the Shira campsite (12,600', 4-6 hours).

Day 5 (Feb 19) From the Shira Plateau, we continue to the east up a ridge, passing the junction towards the peak of Kibo. There are two possible routes here: to either go by way of Lava Tower, called the "Shark's Tooth", or to continue more directly down to the Barranco Hut at an altitude of 12,700'. Here we rest, enjoy dinner, and overnight. Ending the day at the same elevation as when you started, this day is very important for acclimatization and will help your body prepare for summit day (12,700 ft, 4-5 hrs).

Day 6 (Feb 20) After breakfast, we leave Barranco and scramble up the great Barranco Wall. We then descend down into a wild looking valley, before descending and ascending once more to the Karanga Valley campsite (13,800 ft, 4-5 hrs).

Day 7 (Feb 21) Leaving the Karanga Valley campsite we come to the junction which connects with the Mweka Trail. We continue up to the Barafu Hut. You have completed the South Circuit, which offers views of the summit from many different angles. Here we make camp, rest, enjoy dinner, and prepare for a very early morning summit day. The two peaks of Mawenzi and Kibo are to be seen from this position (15,100 ft, 4-5 hrs).

Day 8 (Feb 22) This is undoubtedly our longest and toughest day! Leaving our camp at midnight, we ascend slowly and steadily for about 6 hours. At Stella Point (5685m), we will stop for a short rest and will be rewarded with the most magnificent sunrise we are ever likely to see (weather permitting). From Stella Point, it is about a 45 minute ascent to the summit, Uhuru Peak, the highest point on Mount Kilimanjaro and the continent of Africa. From the summit, we now make our descent continuing straight down to the Mweka Hut camp site, stopping at Barafu for lunch. You will want gaiters and trekking poles for the loose gravel going down. Mweka Camp is situated in the upper forest and mist or rain can be expected in the late afternoon. Here we enjoy our last dinner on the mountain and a well-earned sleep.

Day 9 (Feb 23) A 3-4 hour descent through beautiful forest brings you to the Park gate and our waiting transport. Drive back to the hotel, hot showers, and a celebration dinner.

Day 10 (Feb 24) With the climb over, we completely switch gears today for the safari (Swahili for trip). Departing the hotel after breakfast, we head to Lake Manyara Park. This park is located below a volcanic escarpment at the base of which numerous springs feed the forest meadows, keeping them lush and green, and attracting a large animal population. Elephant herds are frequently encountered. Game Drive with picnic lunch. Dinner and night at Lake Manyara Lodge.

Day 11 (Feb 25) After a breakfast drive to Serengeti, we enjoy a picnic lunch on the way. The Serengeti feels endless as you drive over the rolling grasslands and along woody river banks. We'll have a game drive tour with dinner and night at Seronera lodge.

Day 12 (Feb 26) After breakfast we'll have another game drive in Serengeti. In February you can expect to experience good weather with big herds in the South. Dinner and another night at Seronera lodge.

Day 13 (Feb 27) After a morning game drive we drive to Ngorongoro Crater, stopping for a visit to Olduvai Gorge where we learn how the early origins of humans were discovered.. Dinner and night at Wildlife lodge, situated right on the Rim and absolutely spectacular.

Day 14 (February 28) Breakfast game drive in Ngorongoro with picnic lunch. Most animals live on the crater floor some 1200 feet below the rim. Herds of wildebeest, zebras, warthogs, and buffalos are common and we may also see the black rhino, one of Tanzania's "Big Five" and difficult to see other places. We'll return to the airport for an evening flight home or on to other adventures. Some people have chosen to visit the mountain gorillas of nearby Rwanda.

Day 15 (February 29) Back home, we savor the excitement and challenge of the previous 2 weeks and enjoy the luxury of sleeping in our own beds