



KILIMANJARO CLIMB

SHIRA CRATER

ROUTE ITINERARY

13 Days / 12 Nights • 9 Days on the Mountain

Summary

This is our most popular itinerary for its beauty, 9 total days on the mountain (for maximum acclimatization), and the excitement of spending an overnight at 18,500 feet inside the crater on Kilimanjaro. The route takes us from the west across the Shira Plateau with an ascent to the base of the Lava Tower. From Lava there are two alternate approaches to the crater and summit. Groups will have discussed and decided upon their choice during their climb preparations in Mbahe. One approach is from the southwest through the Western Breach, the classic route to the crater with a challenging rock scramble done in the early morning. The other is a longer and less steep approach from Barafu to the southeast, providing incredible views of Mawenzi to the east.

Day 1: Arrival/Mbahe Farm House

Your trip leader will pick you up upon your arrival at the Kilimanjaro International Airport. A car will take you to Simon's village, Mbahe, which is located in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro, approximately 2 hours from the airport. Accommodations are in the modern cottages at Simon's Mbahe farm house.

Day 2: Mbahe Farm House

You have the morning to rest and relax. You can enjoy delicious "homebrew" coffee, grown and roasted on the farm, and meals made with fruits and vegetables from Simon's garden. After lunch, we will have a brief orientation and equipment check. This is also a day to take optional walks around Mbahe and swim in the waterfall on Simon's land. We will all gather together for dinner. B.L.D.

Day 3: Simba Farm

You will have an early breakfast and depart for the 3 hour drive to Simba Farm in West Kilimanjaro. Simba is an old colonial farm presently owned by the Bruinsma family, good friends of Simon who have farmed in Tanzania for over 25 years. The farm produces mostly barley and wheat for local beer companies. The setting provides gorgeous views of the savanna and Mount Meru to the west. Above the farm is the lush mountain forest. Today we will do about 2 to 3 hours of hiking to the gorge in the forest where colobus monkeys can be seen. We will enjoy an early dinner with fresh vegetables from the farm garden. B.L.D.

Day 4: Big Tree Camp (9,000')

After breakfast we will drive to Londorossi Gate, where you will meet your guides and mountain crew and enter the Kilimanjaro National Park. We begin our climb at about 7,500 feet, walking for a few hours through the thick and undisturbed montane forest to our camp for the night. Many beautiful flowers are observed en route and with luck we will spot colobus monkeys and possibly signs of elephants. In the night you may hear the tree hyrax. B.L.D.

Day 5: Shira 1 Plateau Camp (11,300')

Today we will reach the west side of the Shira Plateau in a hiking time of 6 hours. Taking our time walking through the forest will allow us to observe its animal and bird life. The day's hike takes us from the montane forest, through a transition zone, and into the heath zone, where the old lava flows are visible. Your guides will point out unique environmental differences that characterize these zones. After a picnic lunch we reach the edge of the Plateau and then our camp that provides a dramatic view of Kilimanjaro and its glaciers. B.L.D.

Day 6: Shira 2 Camp (12,600')

Today is an easy paced acclimatization day of 4 to 5 hours hiking. Camp is set higher on the Shira Plateau with more expansive views of Kilimanjaro. There is a conditioning hike in the afternoon where you can enjoy the clusters of giant lobelias and senecios that grow at this elevation. B.L.D.

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Day 7: Lava Tower Camp (15,000')

Today is another acclimatization day as we have a climb of 5 hours to an elevation over 15,000 feet. We will pass through the alpine moorland zone where plants are extremely hardy and consist of lichens, grasses, and heather, to reach Kilimanjaro's alpine desert zone. You will have a spectacular view of the steep Western Breach. After an early afternoon rest we will take a 2 hour round-trip adventure climb up the Lava Tower. B.L.D.

Days 8-10: Western Breach Approach

Day 8: Lava Tower Camp (15,000')

Today we will spend a second night at Lava Tower to adjust to the high desert environment and to acclimatize. We enjoy day hikes to higher elevations and marvel at the fabulous views up and down the mountain. B.L.D.

Day 9: Arrow Glacier Camp (16,100')

We climb higher up the mountain from the west, moving *pole pole* to let our bodies adjust slowly to the elevation. The hike today is only about 2 hours, which allows plenty of time to rest and acclimate. With clear weather you will have great views of the Western Breach, through which we will reach the crater tomorrow. B.L.D.

Day 10: Crater Camp (18,500')

We will rise well before sunrise, eat a hearty breakfast, and begin our ascent of the Western Breach by 5:00 a.m. The climb is a steep and invigorating challenge, but with several days on the mountain behind you, you will be physically and mentally sharp for the climb. The trail has sections of scree and sections requiring scrambling over boulders. As you reach the lip of the crater your elation will be second only to that when summiting Uhuru Peak tomorrow. The wide crater floor is a magnificent arctic moonscape; our camp is set in soft sand near the indigo streaked Furtwangler Glacier. B.L.D.

Days 8-10: Barafu Approach

Day 8: Karanga Valley Camp (13,100')

Today we will climb the Great Barranco rock wall - not too steep but challenging for some – which our guides make safe and accessible for everyone. We will go *pole pole* (meaning “slowly” in Kiswahili). You will be able to see the breathtaking Heim Glacier. We descend into the Karanga Valley and then to our camp on a ridge above the valley, where you will be able to enjoy a rest and have a sponge bath with warm water. B.L.D.

Day 9: Barafu Camp (16,000')

As we begin trekking today the trail turns steadily uphill. The temperature will grow colder and the landscape more sparse as we work our way to Barafu Camp, set on an exposed ridge. *Barafu* means “ice” in Kiswahili. Hiking time is 4 to 5 hours. We will rest and acclimatize here at 16,000 feet to prepare for our climb into the arctic zone and up to the crater the next morning. B.L.D.

Day 10: Crater Camp (18,500')

Today we slowly wind our way up from Barafu to the rim of the crater late in the afternoon. Hiking this section during the day gives us magnificent views of Mawenzi, Kilimanjaro's second highest peak at 16,890 feet. From the rim we will descend across the arctic moonscape of the wide crater floor to the Crater Camp, set in soft sand near the indigo streaked Furtwangler Glacier. B.L.D.

Day 11: Uhuru Peak/Mweka High Camp (11,000')

After an early breakfast we make the final ascent to Uhuru Peak, reaching the 19,340 foot summit of Kilimanjaro by 8 a.m. At this early hour, before the clouds close in, you will have spectacular views of Africa in all directions. Tea and snacks will be served on the top. After a brief stay of 20-30 minutes and photos all around, we will descend 2 to 3 hours to Barafu for lunch, rest, and to take off extra layers. Then we continue downhill 3 to 4 hours to the edge of the Mweka Forest. Tonight's camp is 8,000 feet below the

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summit! It is a long descent and trekking poles are recommended. Eat, share your experiences of the climb and sleep soundly. Congratulations, you made it to the Roof of Africa! B.L.D.

Day 12: Mbahe Farm House

Our last hike of 3 to 4 hours is a descent of 3,500 feet to the trailhead at Mweka Gate. The hike is steep in places and may be slippery if wet. Again we recommend that you use trekking poles. At the gate you will say goodbye to your mountain crew and enjoy a picnic lunch. We will then return to Simon's Mbahe Village farm house for a hot shower and a celebration dinner. B.L.D.

Day 13: Mbahe Farm House/Departure

Today is a rest and relaxation day at the farm house. Optional activities include light hiking, swimming, visiting with the neighbors, drumming, and tasting homemade banana beer, or shopping in Moshi Town. For those returning home you will be transferred to the Kilimanjaro International Airport to catch your flight. Those continuing on safari will pack lightly for the continuation of your African adventure tomorrow. B.L.

2009 Price:

Shira Crater Route: U.S. \$3,665 per person (double occupancy)
Single supplement: U.S. \$420

Price includes:

- All accommodations
- All meals as indicated (B.L.D.)
- Services of trip leader, climbing guides, and mountain crew
- All group camping and cooking equipment
- Transfers to/from Kilimanjaro International Airport and to/from park entrance/exit gates

Price does not include:

International airfare; optional tipping or gratuities to leaders, guides, crew, or other staff; additional accommodations made necessary by airline schedule changes or other factors; pre-trip expenses such as medical immunizations, travel insurance, passports, and visas; airport departure taxes; any other expenses of a personal nature such as alcohol and laundry.

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