



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 18,800 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, which you will be able to climb for magnificent 360 degree vistas. We approach the crater from the southwest through the Western Breach, with a challenging rock scramble done in the early morning. After an overnight camped in the soft sand of the crater, we have a sunrise climb to the summit before descending to the southeast and incredible views of Mawenzi Peak.

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 Mbahe Village, located in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro, approximately 2 hours from the airport. Accommodations are in the rustic cottages at Simon's Mbahe farm house.

Day 2: Mbahe Farm House (6,000')

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 the 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 (5,800')

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: Londerossi Gate (6,890') to Big Tree Camp (8,700'), 3.8 miles

After breakfast we will drive to Londerossi Gate, where you will meet your guides and mountain crew and enter the Kilimanjaro National Park. From the trailhead we will walk 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: Big Tree Camp (8,700') to Shira 1 Camp (11,420'), 4.7 miles

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 1 Camp (11,420') to Shira 2 Camp (12,750'), 5.3 miles

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: Shira 2 Camp (12,750') to Lava Tower Camp (15,230'), 4.3 miles

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. This scramble will help prepare you for the climbing days ahead B.L.D.

Day 8: Lava Tower Camp (15,230')

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: Lava Tower Camp (15,230') to Arrow Glacier Camp (15,980'), 1.7 miles

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: Arrow Glacier Camp (15,980') to Crater Camp (18,800'), 1.6 miles

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.

Day 11: Crater Camp (18,800') to Uhuru Peak (19,340') to Millennium Camp (12,530'), 6.0 miles

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 the Barafu Camp 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 7,000 feet below the 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: Millennium Camp (12,530') to Mweka Gate (5,380'), 7.7 miles; Mbahe Farm House

Our last day is another descent of 7,000 feet with 4 to 5 hours of hiking to the trailhead at Mweka Gate. The trail is steep in places and may be slippery if wet. At the gate we will temporarily say goodbye to our mountain crew and enjoy a picnic lunch. The trip leaders will take you back to Mbahe Village for a hot shower and a celebration dinner with the whole team. 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 today 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 and meals as indicated (B.L.D.)
- Kilimanjaro National Park entrance and camping fees
- Transfers to/from Kilimanjaro International Airport and to/from park entrance/exit gates
- Services of trip leader, climbing guides, and mountain crew
- All group camping and cooking equipment

Price does not include:

International airfare; 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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