

Mt. Kilimanjaro Trek Overview

Offered Via Green Paw Adventures



The Roots of Change

Mt. Kilimanjaro Overview

Climbing and summiting Mt. Kilimanjaro is an incredible experience and the feat of a lifetime! Towering over Africa at 19,341ft/ 5,895m, Mt. Kilimanjaro is the highest peak in Africa and the tallest freestanding mountain in the world. We have compiled information for you to prepare for your climb in this overview. There are many other resources for you to learn about climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro as well, such as going to a mountaineering store near you (ie. REI) to speak with an avid climber or reading blogs about the climb online.

What To Expect

Your climb will take 6 days: 4.5 days to the summit and 1.5 days to descend. Most treks will be a full day where you will take several short breaks, drink a lot of water, and have substantial meals. Be prepared to wake up early to depart camp and get a good start each day.

Expect your body temperature to fluctuate during the day as you climb. Layers are incredibly important so you can add and remove layers accordingly depending on your activity level, the temperature, etc. **It does get cold while climbing Kilimanjaro, especially at night, so make sure to be prepared for temperatures at/or below freezing!**

Make sure you have high quality, proper gear, as this will greatly impact your success and comfort when climbing the mountain. There are limited items that we do recommend renting in-country, for your packing and travel ease, such as hiking poles.

Preparation

While you prepare to climb, it will be helpful to dedicate some time towards fitness. You do not need to be in excellent physical shape for your climb, however, you should focus on increasing your cardio and remember that your days will consist of long hikes at high altitudes.

You will be hiking at least 6-8 hours a day while climbing Kilimanjaro. The best fitness preparation you can do is getting outside and doing some hikes/walks. Make sure to wear the hiking boots you'll be using on Kilimanjaro so they are broken in. During the climb, you will carry a backpack with daily necessities, such as proper layers, 3 liters of water, and a few small snacks. It's a good idea to put a little weight in your backpack for any practice hikes you take.

Please make sure you show up with boots that are already broken in. You will also be able to wear them on the worksite but you **DO NOT** want to be unpacking new boots the day before your climb.

Mental endurance is the most important part of submitting Mt. Kilimanjaro. Be ready to face adversity on the mountain and overcome it alongside your fellow volunteers. Nobody has ever climbed Kilimanjaro and said “oh that was easy”, however most everybody that climbs does get to the very top. Your mental strength and endurance will get you there!

Gear for Rent/Hire + Overnight Gear

You will be able to rent/hire clothing and hiking gear if necessary, but we **highly recommend** that you bring all the required clothing from home. This especially includes your under layers, like flannels, socks, and long underwear. If you don't have gear, borrow from family or friends, buy new, or buy used. If you do rent/hire clothing and gear, know that it may not be as good of quality of what you could bring from home.

If possible, please bring a high quality sleeping bag, down jacket, and outer layers (*waterproof shell jacket and pants).

If necessary, you can rent/hire items that you cannot bring for your climb from Green Paw Adventures for \$15.00 USD per item. Before you begin your climb, you will meet your Lead Guide to review a list of recommended items and decide what you need for rent/hire.

Note: the asterisk (*) on the packing list indicates items available for rent in Tanzania.

Your porters will set up your tents before you arrive to camp each night, which you will share with **1-2** other fellow GIVE Volunteers. Note that you may not have the same tent each night but you will have the same sleeping bag (if rented) and sleeping pad throughout the entirety of the climb.

We recommend you sleeping bag designed for 0 Fahrenheit/ -17 Celsius degree weather. Warm socks are also incredibly important for summit night. You can also bring hand warmers to help keep you warm at night or during the climb.

****You will be provided a tent and sleeping pad free of charge on the climb. Please bring your own sleeping bag for comfort and quality. It is possible to rent one though for \$15.**

Camera

You will not have an opportunity to charge your camera while climbing Kilimanjaro, so make sure it is fully charged when you leave our accommodations in Arusha. During your climb, keep in mind that you'll want to have a charged camera battery on the summit to take photos. We suggest that you bring an extra set of batteries, extra battery pack, or a solar/portable charger to charge your camera.

Water

It is extremely important that you stay hydrated during your climb. Dehydration may contribute to altitude sickness symptoms. It is recommended that you drink 3-5 liters a day to stay properly hydrated. It is possible that your water will freeze on top of Kilimanjaro, so you can bring a thermal water bottle for that portion of your climb, although it is not necessary. We recommend not using a Camelback when you summit as the hose can and will freeze.

The national park **does not** allow disposable plastic water bottles. It is recommended to bring 3 large reusable water bottles to carry at least 3 liters of water with you in your daypack. There will not be opportunities to refill once you leave your campsite each morning.

Your porters will boil water (fresh glacial/snow melt from the summit) to purify it for drinking. If it makes you feel more comfortable, you can also bring purification tablets to purify your water an extra time.

Luggage and Daypack

You will carry a daypack everyday while climbing Kilimanjaro containing **only what you need for the day**. Your porters will carry your other bag with clothing you don't need on daily treks. They will also carry your sleeping bag for you (it does not need to fit in your duffel). Your daypack should either be waterproof or you should have a waterproof cover. We recommend a 20-30 liter backpack large enough to carry at least 3 liters of water, your camera, raincoat, snacks, warm layers, toilet paper, hat, and sunscreen. It is important not to over pack your daypack with items you will not need each day as you can pack these items in your other bag.

Remember that your porters will carry your duffel bag, so it is important to only bring what you will need on the climb. **You can safely leave clothing and items you will not need on your climb at our accommodations in Arusha.** Since you will only bring a portion of your belongings up Kilimanjaro, it's smart to bring a small duffel bag or collapsible bag in your luggage to Tanzania. You can leave your larger luggage at our accommodations and bring just your small duffel with Kilimanjaro gear/clothing in it to the mountain.

****You will need one small backpack and duffel bag/travel backpack for all your Mt. Kilimanjaro gear (the porters will carry this). Do not bring your entire luggage for your excursion up Mt. Kilimanjaro – only bring what you'll need for the trek.**

Clothing

It is recommended that you take several thin layers of clothing that allow ventilation as opposed to a few thick ones. It is easier to add or shed layers as needed throughout the day based on your body temperature. Clothes made from synthetic materials are recommended, as wool clothing takes longer to dry. If all you have is wool layers, bring them! **Do not bring cotton base layers - cotton does not naturally wick sweat and this can lead to sickness.** You will always want either wool or a synthetic to be the layer against your skin.

Guides/Porters and Tips

On average, it takes about 4 guides/porters to carry one person's gear, food, water, tents, etc. So, if you have a group of 10 climbing Kilimanjaro, then you can expect to have about 40 guides/porters. Your guides will be the ones briefing you on the days ahead and taking care of your health while on the mountain. Most of them have summited Kilimanjaro hundreds of times in their careers. Your porters are incredibly supportive and fun during the climb and will be the ones carrying up most of your stuff. There is a lot of time to talk with them, learn more about their experiences and culture, and get to know them!

Tips are a significant portion of your guide and porter's salaries. The tips for your guides and porters are not included in the cost to climb Kilimanjaro. You must bring a minimum of \$150 USD to give to your lead guide, who will disperse tips to the other guides and porters. **This \$150 tip is a minimum, feel free to bring whatever you'd like, as you will truly want to reward the porters who work so hard for you!**

****Do not forget the money for your tip! You MUST bring at least \$150 for your guides and porters. This can be in Tanzanian Shillings or USD.**

It is recommended to keep this money in a separate envelope so not to accidentally spend it before the climb starts.

Footwear

Your boots should be well "broken in" to avoid irritation, blisters, and pain. We suggest that you bring bandages to prevent blisters if you feel one coming on, or in case you actually get blisters or hotspots.

It's important to have comfortable socks and at least a couple thermal pair for the cold nights. It's also recommended to bring liners to keep your feet dry and avoid blisters.

We highly suggest wearing your hiking boots as much as possible prior to departure. Also, you can break your boots in while volunteering at the construction site on Zanzibar. Many volunteers choose this route instead of bringing separate work and hiking boots.

Meals

Each day, you'll have a hot breakfast, a packed lunch, and a hot dinner. The chef, Mr. Delicious, cooks amazing meals and tends to surprise you with dishes you've been craving! A common appetizer is hot soup and tea, hot chocolate, or coffee before your dinner.

If you have specific dietary needs, tell your lead guide at the meeting at our accommodations prior to your Kilimanjaro trek. They can and will accommodate any dietary restrictions during the trek.

Altitude Sickness

It is hard to determine how your body will respond to increasing altitude. Altitude sickness occurs when you go to high too fast or remain at high altitudes for too long. If you experience altitude sickness, descending to a lower altitude will make you feel better and decrease your symptoms.

There are many precautions that you can take during the climb to mitigate altitude sickness, such as walking slow to acclimatize, drinking enough water (this is drinkable oxygen), and getting adequate sleep. Kilimanjaro is not a race – take your time climbing the mountain and listen to your body and your guides. It is important to maintain good communication with your guides and let them know if you feel sick or ill in any sense.

There are medicines available for altitude sickness, which you can discuss with your doctor. There are also medications available at the pharmacy in Arusha if you'd prefer to purchase in country.

Mt. Kilimanjaro Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Arusha

Say goodbye to your fellow volunteers, who are not climbing Kilimanjaro, and take a flight from Dar Es Salaam to Kilimanjaro Airport. The Green Paw Adventures team will pick you up at the airport and transfer you to your accommodations in Arusha for the evening. Upon arrival you will get you will have a delicious dinner and get a briefing from your Guides about the first day of hiking. They will also double check your gear and be able to help you out in case you need any rentals. Get some sleep and mentally prepare yourself for the incredible adventure ahead!

Day 2: Machame Gate to Machame Camp

Have breakfast at your accommodations before departing to Machame Gate. Once you arrive at the gate, your guides and porters will pack your equipment and supplies in their mountain rucksacks while you enjoy a packed lunch. Begin your trek on a windy path through the incredible rainforest until you arrive at Machame campsite. Be prepared for rain while hiking in the forest, as there is a high possibility of rain, especially in the wetter

months from November until May. After you settle in with your tent and gear at the campsite, you will have a warm, delicious dinner. And rest up for the next day.

Habitat: Montane Forest; Trek: 5-7hrs; Distance: Approximately 10.8 km; Overnight: Machame Camp (10,100ft/ 3,100m).

Day 3: Machame Camp to Shira Camp

Leave the glades of the rainforest and hike through the moorland zone. Continue on an ascending path, crossing a little valley to a steep rocky ridge covered with heathers to the Shira plateau. The route then turns West into a river gorge and after a short hike you'll arrive at the Shira campsite. After Arrival at Shira Camp, you will have a hot lunch, a little bit of time to rest/nap and then do a small acclimatization hike. You will hike up for about an hour, hangout for a little bit and then come back down to camp. This acclimatization hike will help your body familiarize itself with the new altitude and help your recovery while sleeping that night.

Habitat: Moorland; Trek: 5-7hrs; Distance: Approximately 5.2km; Overnight: Shira Camp (12,500ft/ 3,800m).

Day 4: Shira Camp to Lava Tower to Barranco Camp

Continue your trek East into a semi-desert and rocky landscape to the massive Lava Tower, which is called "The Sharks Tooth." This day is geared towards acclimatization and you may experience some minor altitude symptoms, like breathlessness. Reach the arrow glacier and continue your descent to the Barranco campsite, where you will spend the night at the great Barranco Wall and should see an incredible sunset.

Habitat: Semi-desert; Trek: 5-7hrs; Distance: Approximately 10.7km; Overnight: Barranco Camp (13,000ft/ 3,950m).

Day 5: Barranco Camp to Barafu Camp

Ascend the mighty Barranco Wall on a steep ridge, which is an easier ascent than it looks! Take a break just below the Heim Glacier, where the breathtaking mountain will tower over you. Follow the route down through the Karanga Valley and take in the view of the two peaks: Mawenzi and Kih0. You'll refill your water bottles during lunch at Karanga Hut. Continue hiking to Barafu Camp, enjoy dinner, and prepare your gear and thermal clothing. You'll go to bed in the early evening before departing for the summit around midnight.

Habitat: Alpine Desert; Distance: Approximately 9.4km; Trek: 8-9hrs; Overnight: Barafu Camp (15,000ft/ 4,600m).

Day 6: Barafu Camp to Uhuru Peak to Mweka

After a light snack of tea, coffee, biscuits and cookies, begin your trek just after midnight. Make sure you wear your thermals, windbreakers, and **headlamps!** Ascend a steep talus towards the crater rim at Stella Point (5,745m). The trek to Stella Point is typically the most mentally and physically challenging portion of the entire route. Take a short break at Stella Point and soak in the view before continuing to the summit, Uhuru Peak. **You have now reached the highest point in Africa 5,895 meters!!!** After enjoying the summit and

taking photos, descend back to Barafu Camp. Have a short rest, pack your gear and head down to Mweka Hut, which is in the upper forest.

Habitat: Stone scree and ice-capped summit; Distance: Approximately 4.5km ascent, 10.8km descent; Trek: 5-8hrs to Uhuru Peak, 6-8 hrs descent to camp; Overnight: Mweka Camp (10,000ft/ 3,100m).

Day 7: Mweka Camp to Mweka Gate to Arusha

Enjoy breakfast and a small celebration before descending to the Mweka Park Gate. Say goodbye to your guides and porters and drive back to Arusha. Head back to the accommodation for a well-earned meal, shower, and good night's sleep!

Habitat: Forest; Distance: Approximately 8.5km; Trek: 4-6hrs; Overnight: Mweka Camp (10,000ft/ 3,100m).

Day 8: Departure Day

Breakfast/Lunch at the accommodations before heading to the airport. Say goodbye to your fellow volunteers as you head to the airport with your Kilimanjaro certificate & passport in hand!

Mt. Kilimanjaro Checklist

The below information and checklist is to assist you as you prepare to climb the tallest mountain in Africa after your GIVE excursion!

Green Paw Adventures **does not** allow suitcases; they suggest **waterproof rucksack** or **duffel bags** for the climb. GIVE strongly recommends that you bring a traveling backpack for your entire Tanzania excursion that can also be used for the climb. You will only need to pack what you need for the trek while leaving your other clothes and belongings behind. Your possessions will be locked and safe.

Note that you will not carry your own luggage while climbing Kilimanjaro. The porters on your hiking team will carry your bags. **The maximum weight for your luggage during the Kilimanjaro climb is 33lbs/15kgs.** Because the porters will be taking the bulk of your possessions, you will only be hiking with a small daypack to carry your snacks, a water bottle, sunscreen, and other smaller essentials like extra layers of clothes and a camera.

Checklist of required items (**you can rent/hire from Green Paw*):

- \$150 Minimum Required for Guide/Porter Tips** (can be in USD or TZS)
- Hiking day pack (waterproof or with separate water proof cover 20-30L)
- Small duffel bag or travel backpack 45-60 L (waterproof! This is for porters to carry your Kilimanjaro gear and supplies up the mountain)
- Water resistant hiking boots that are worn-in
- Shoes for leisure around campsite
- Balaclava/buff to protect your face from the wind

- Wool hat/beanie
- Sunglasses with dark lenses for eye protection from the sun
- *Gaiters (useful when encountering snow, on summit day)
- Snow gloves and mittens/liners
- Fleece zip-up
- Down jacket
- *Waterproof and windproof pants (expect rain and wind)
- *Waterproof and windproof jacket (this is your outer layer, expect rain and wind)
- Shorts & t-shirt (for first day of hiking, moisture-wicking fabric to stay dry)
- 1-3 long sleeve thermal shirts
- 1-2 thermal long underwear
- 6 pairs of socks
- 2 thermal pairs of socks for night time and summit
- Small wash kit or wet wipes
- Water bottles/Camelback (camelback hoses will freeze on the summit)
Note: 3 liters of water will be needed, minimum, per day in your daypack. The national park does not allow plastic water bottles.
- Energy snacks (i.e. Cliff bars or energy chews)
- First aid kit, including Band-Aids for blisters, eye drops, headache tablets, painkillers, flu and cold tablets
- Altitude medicine (per your doctors discretion)
- Sun screen (SPF 30+)
- Lip balm (SPF 30+)
- Insect repellent
- Headlamp (**spare batteries for headlamp**)
- Hand warmers for nighttime and on summit night
- DryBag to protect camera or gear
- Toiletry basics
- Toilet paper
- *Walking Poles (plan to rent these)
- Camera (with extra batteries)
- *Sleeping bag (we **highly recommend** you bring your own for better quality)
- Sleeping mat (provided but you are welcome to bring your own)

*You can rent/hire from Green Paw for \$15 an item. We hope this information and checklist helps you prepare for your journey to the top of Africa!

The simple rule of winter expeditions is to stay dry and warm. Choose clothing layers that wick moisture, dry quickly, insulate and are waterproof and breathable. By adjusting these layers, you can regulate the amount of warmth you need. The 3 basic layers:

Base Layer: This is basically your underwear or the layer next to your skin. Synthetic and merino wool fabrics work best (avoid cotton). They wick perspiration away from your skin to outer layers so it can evaporate. They dry quickly so you spend minimal time in wet clothing.

Middle Layer: This is your insulating layer. It is primarily designed to help you retain body heat. Fleece or microfleece shirts, pants and jacket and/or a down jacket are great middle layers.

Outer layer or shell: This is your waterproof/windproof/breathable layer. Gore-Tex will provide premium protection or choose less expensive options, such as polyurethane-coated fabrics that are equally waterproof but somewhat less breathable. Look for core vents and underarm vents that expel excess heat and moisture.

Safety

It is imperative that you respect and adhere to the advice and instructions given by your Kilimanjaro Mountain Guides. Above all, this is what will contribute to your success while climbing Kilimanjaro. If you have any medical conditions, tell your lead guide your condition, symptoms, and treatment during your preparation meeting at our accommodations in Arusha.

Your mountain guides have the complete authority, at their own discretion, to bring down yourself or any other climber from Mount Kilimanjaro to a lower camp or to the base of the mountain. They are trained professionals and although their job and desire are to get you to Uhuru Peak, the safety of every individual is paramount.

Please understand that this trek is operated under the care and guidance of local professionals. While GIVE fully endorses the aptitude and professionalism of the services provided by Green Paw Adventures, *the Mt. Kilimanjaro trek is not operated under the care of Growth International Volunteer Excursions.*

Please note that you will be with other volunteers from your trip on the climb, but your GIVE guides will not be on the Mt. Kilimanjaro Add-On. There will be several local guides and 3-4 porters per person on the trek with you through the duration of the climb. After the climb, you will drive back to our accommodations in Arusha. Airport transfers have been arranged for you the following day.

GIVE Contact Information

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Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you and we are excited to see you in Tanzania!

