

KILIMANJARO – LEMOSHO GLADES ROUTE
~VIA THE SOUTHERN CIRCUIT/BARAFU CAMP~
9 DAYS / 8 NIGHTS on the mountain

Route Description

The Lemosho Glades route is one of the lesser used initial ascent routes on Kilimanjaro, partly because of its remote location and likewise the difficult roads leading to the trailhead. The trailhead is at relatively high elevation, and thus we start slow and easy on this route. Buffalo and elephant sightings are possible on the first day trekking through the forest. The route leads up to the western edge of the Shira Plateau, and the hike across the plateau is said to be one of the most stunningly beautiful hikes in Africa. The trail merges on day three of the trek with the Shira Route (which begins near this point, at the end of the 4x4 track at the Morum Barrier Gate), and on day four merges with the Machame Route. From this point all three trails continue to Lava Tower, and then down into the Great Barranco Valley, where the Umbwe route joins steeply from the south. From here, the trail circumvents counter-clockwise around the upper slopes of the Kibo massif, over the high-desert ridges to the Karanga Valley (stopping for an extra night on this 9-day itinerary) then to an exposed campsite set on a high ridge; Barafu (meaning literally “ice” in Kiswahili). From Barafu Camp we make our daytime ascent to the crater rim, then on to Crater Camp. This part of the experience sets this trek apart from any other. The camp is set in soft “beach” sand, and looking from the tent, trekkers can see up close the vertical ice walls of the Furtwangler Glacier. The next morning is only 1.5 to 2 hours to the summit!. Overall this trek is designed to get you closer to nature, and to experience Kilimanjaro in a way that so few others do. The route as per this itinerary is the longest distance to trek up Kilimanjaro, so fitness certainly plays a role in the enjoyment and success of this trek. We start slow, and gain altitude slowly for the first four days, then the physical and mental demands increase. The many changes of scenery, the spectacular hike across the Shira Plateau, and the time spent in the crater make this trek truly special. The route done in nine days includes an extra day at Karanga Valley Camp, at 13,000 feet (3,950 mt.), between Barranco and Barafu Camps, to help split the long day in half, and also it is important for acclimatization. There are no huts on this route; the accommodation is in

mountain tents and dining is in our mess tents. Toilet tents with convenient and sanitary portable flush toilets are set up at each camp.

Daily Itinerary

DAY 1 LEMOSHO TRAILHEAD (7,800 ft./ 2,375 m) ~ FOREST CAMP (9,500 ft./ 2,895 m)

Departure from Arusha will be at around 7:30am for Londorossi gate, about 4 hours, where you will complete entry formalities. Then drive to the Lemosho trailhead (another hour to reach the trailhead). Upon arrival at trail-head, eat lunch, then commence through undisturbed forest which winds to the first camp, only about 3-4 hours of trekking. Overnight at Forest Camp (Mtee Mkubwa Camp)

DAY 2 FOREST CAMP ~ SHIRA 1 CAMP (12,200 ft./ 3,720 m)

Once out of the forest, take a steep track into a Savannah of tall grasses, heather, and volcanic rock draped with lichen beards. Ascend through the lush rolling hills below the Shira plateau, finally reaching camp at the edge of the plateau, a day of 5-6 hours trekking. The view of Kibo from across the plateau is amazing.

DAY 3 SHIRA 1 CAMP ~ SHIRA 2 CAMP (12,600 ft./ 3,950 m)

Full day exploration of the Shira plateau; Trek east toward Kibo's glaciated peak, with the option to visit the ancient collapsed Shira cone, the oldest of Kilimanjaro's three volcanoes. Arrive at Shira 2 camp (Fischers's Camp), at 12,600 ft. Shira is one of the highest plateaus on earth, averaging 12,500 feet. Trekking time without the optional excursions is about 3 hours.

DAY 4 SHIRA 2 CAMP ~ BARRANCO CAMP (12,950 ft./ 3,950 mt)

Proceed steadily upward over expansive ridgelines of high desert to Lava Tower, for lunch. The trek is about 4 hours. Lava Tower, a 300 foot volcanic plug, marks an exposed pass at 15,000 feet. In the afternoon, descend the

steep track into the Great Barranco Valley. Barranco Camp is set in a valley enclosed on three sides with the massive valley walls and the Kibo massif itself. Hanging glaciers glint in the sunshine above, amidst the eerie landscape of plants such as the giant groundsels (*Senecio Kilimanjari*), and the uniquely endemic Giant Lobelia. Trekking time is 6-7 hours. A resupply of fresh food and supplies will reach camp this evening.

DAY 5 BARRANCO CAMP ~ KARANGA CAMP (13,100 ft./ 3,995 mt.)

Today we trek to Karanga Valley Camp, at 13,000 feet (3,950 mt.), between Barranco and Barafu Camps. This day has proven to be very important for acclimatization. The day begins with a scramble up the steep 'Barranco Wall', then traversing up and down the slopes of valleys which have carved their way into the mountain's southern face. Kibo's glaciers loom above to your left and the jagged peaks of Mawenzi jut into the African sky at just under 17,000 feet straight ahead. We reach the Karanga Valley after 3-4 hours of trekking for a hot lunch. Afternoon to relax or to take excursions from camp.

DAY 6 KARANGA CAMP ~ BARAFU CAMP (15,200 ft./ 4,630 mt.)

From here the trail turns steadily uphill. The temperature will grow colder and the landscape more sparse as we near Barafu Camp. Barafu Camp is set on a small, exposed flat area on a ridge, acting a base camp from which you will make your summit attempt at midnight tonight. Total trekking time is 4-5 hours, with a hot lunch upon reaching camp. The afternoon is yours to rest and prepare for the long night ahead. Eat and drink as much as possible before retiring early to your tent for rest and sleep.

DAY 7 BARAFU CAMP ~ CRATER CAMP (18,800 ft./ 5,730 m)

A 5am wake-up call is the start of a juggernaut (7-10 hours of trekking). You begin trekking at 6am up the winding path of endless switchbacks. After about 6-9 hours of walking, you will come to the edge of the crater, at Stella Point, at 18,870 feet (5,750 m), which is the end of the steep track. From here, there is a gently sloped trek of 30 min- 1 hour across the lunar landscape of the inner crater, to reach the Crater Camp. Our camp is set in soft sands near the retreating vertical ice walls of the Furtwangler glacier. Rest and enjoy snacks and hot drinks in the mess tent, then opt to explore the strange lunar landscape of the inner crater, to include a visit to Reusch Crater, the ash pit, and the glaciers. So few that trek Kilimanjaro ever experience the summit zone in this way.

DAY 8 CRATER CAMP ~ UHURU PEAK (19,340 ft./ 5,895 m) ~ MWEKA CAMP (10,070 ft./ 3,070 m)

Rise early to watch the sunrise from the summit, which will take about 1.5 hours from Crater Camp. After a short time at the summit, descend along the gently sloping crater rim to Stella Point, then descend back to Barafu Camp for lunch. In the afternoon continue the descent into the Heather Zone to Mweka Camp for the night. The trekking time from Uhuru Peak to Mweka Camp will be from 6-8 hours. Total trekking time is from 8-10 hours.

DAY 8 MWEKA CAMP ~ MWEKA GATE (5,370 ft. /1,635 m)

Descend straight to the gate (2-3 hours), where you'll have lunch and will be awarded climbing certificates. Transfer back to Arusha for a much-welcomed shower