

KILIMANJARO – LEMOSHO ROUTE
~VIA THE WESTERN BREACH, WITH CRATER CAMP~
8 DAYS / 7 NIGHTS on the mountain

Route Description

The Lemosho Glades route via the Western Breach is the amongst the least used combination of routes on Kilimanjaro, partly because of the remote starting location and rough roads leading to the trailhead, but also the Western Breach itself being the least used summit ascent route. 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 trail 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 four with the Machame Route, and continues to Lava Tower (a volcanic plug which has endured the ravages of wind and erosion to stand a few hundred feet above a pass along the trail). The next day the trail continues up steeply to Arrow Glacier at the foot of the Western Breach Wall. From this camp, the trail lies at a slope of about 45%, with sections of scrambling and occasionally some snow and ice, which we'll provide hand ropes and cut steps with ice axes, if necessary. The trail reaches the crater rim at Crater Point at about 19,000 feet (5,800 m), 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! All the trekking is done by daylight except for a few hours of the early morning departure up the Western Breach. Overall this trek is designed to get you closer to nature, and to experience Kilimanjaro in a way that so few others do. The steepness of the Breach Wall and the night at crater camp make this trek quite difficult, but generally more than adequate for acclimatization. The spectacular hike across the Shira Plateau and the beauty of camping at crater camp make this trek truly unique. 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 all camps.

Important notes:

The steepness and terrain of this route (on the Western Breach) makes it only suitable for homogenous groups (where every member has similar fitness levels and experience). All those who plan to attempt this must have prior experience scrambling on steep slopes. There is significant danger of rockfall on this route. We provide helmets to all climbers, guides, and porters. No-one with the medical condition "vertigo" will be allowed to climb this route.

Daily Itinerary

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

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 trailhead, 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 mt.)

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 mt.)

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 ~ LAVA TOWER CAMP (15,000 ft./ 4,570 mt.)

Proceed steadily up and down the expansive ridgelines of high desert to Lava Tower. The trek is about 4 hours. Lava Tower, a 300 foot volcanic plug, marks an exposed pass at 15,000 feet, where the campsite is set. Scramble to the top of Lava Tower for fabulous panoramic views, and a different perspective of your campsite. A resupply of fresh food and supplies will reach camp this evening.

DAY 5 LAVA TOWER CAMP ~ ARROW GLACIER CAMP (16,100 ft./ 4,905 mt.)

A 1.5 - 2 hour-trek up a steep, boulder-strewn path bring us to Arrow Glacier camp, at the foot of the great Western Breach. From this campsite rises the steep path up to the crater. The massive headwall of the breach glows a warm red in the afternoon sun, while you rest in camp in preparation for the most challenging day ahead.

DAY 6 ARROW GLACIER CAMP ~ CRATER CAMP (18,750 ft./ 5,715 mt.)

A 2am wake-up call begins the day, and after a hot breakfast, we begin to ascend the Western Breach at 3am, which will take approximately 5-7 hours. Upon reaching the crater rim, we'll be treated to a stunning view of the Northern Icefields, the Furtwangler Glacier, and Uhuru Peak itself. Another 30 minutes will take us to our camp, 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 7 CRATER CAMP ~ UHURU PEAK (19,340 ft./ 5,895 mt.) ~ MWEKA CAMP (10,200 ft./ 3,110 mt.)

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 (on the crater rim, at 19,000 feet (5,790 mt.)), then descend the Mweka Route down a steep scree slope to Barafu Camp (15,100 ft. / 4,600 mt.) 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 (6,000 ft. /1,830 mt.)

Descend straight to the gate (2-3 hours), where you'll have lunch and will be awarded climbing certificates.
