

KILIMANJARO - MACHAME ROUTE
~VIA BARAFU CAMP~
6 DAYS / 5 NIGHTS on the mountain

Route Description

The Machame (Whiskey) Route is the most popular camping route on Kilimanjaro. It's a rugged combination of routes which begins through the rainforest at Machame Village on the southwest side of the mountain, and over six days, rises onto the edge of the Shira Plateau, down into the beautiful Great Barranco Valley, then circumvents the Kibo massif counter-clockwise through alpine desert until reaching Barafu Camp. From here, the trek to the summit is done overnight to the crater rim on the steep scree slopes of the east-south-east facing Mweka Route. The trek winds through some beautiful scenery, which changes quite dramatically every day. The route done in six days is physically challenging for most people. The last two days (the trek from Barranco to Barafu and then the overnight trek to the summit) require mental and physical toughness, due to the high altitude and short amount of time to rest before the overnight summit attempt. There are no huts on this route; the accommodation is in mountain tents and dining is in our dining tents. Toilet tents with convenient and sanitary portable flush toilets are set up at all camps.

Daily Itinerary

DAY 1 MACHAME GATE (5,950 ft./ 1,815 mt.) ~ MACHAME CAMP (9,850 ft./ 3,000 m)

Departure from Arusha will be at around 8am for the Machame Gate, about 1.5 hours drive. Upon completion of entry formalities, begin walking through the mist on a 4 x 4 track for about an hour into the forest. The track ends, and the trail continues up through the dripping, verdant forest. Trekkers will likely hear the many exotic birds in the canopy above, and many even see black & white colobus monkeys and sykes monkeys as they hike along the forest floor. The trek is quite long (12 miles / 20 km), though not very steep, and it takes from 5 to 7 hours trekking to reach the first

camp. Machame Camp is just above the forest zone, in the heather zone. When it is clear, there are views of jagged Shira ridge and the summit itself.

DAY 2 MACHAME CAMP ~ SHIRA CAMP (12,600 ft./ 3,840 m)

Wake early to a steaming cup of tea or coffee served in your tent, and then after breakfast, begin up the steep track through a savannah of tall grasses, and trees of giant Heather and Erica. The clouds should clear for a beautiful view of the Western Breach and the glaciers atop which mark the summit; Uhuru Peak. Scramble around large boulders as you enter the moorland zone, marked by the bizarre lobelia and senecio plants, and volcanic rocks draped with lichen beards which protect wild alpine flowers growing at their bases. You'll reach camp after descending a small valley and crossing a brook, then ascending up onto the Shira Ridge, after a total of about 4 to 5 hours of trekking.

DAY 3 SHIRA CAMP ~ BARRANCO CAMP (12,950 ft./ 3,950 m)

Proceed steadily upward over long ridgelines of high desert about 4 hours, and break for lunch at about 14,500 feet (4,420 mt.). After lunch, continue to Lava Tower, a 300 foot-tall volcanic plug which marks an exposed pass at 15,000 feet (4,600 m). In the afternoon, descend the steep track into the Great Barranco Valley. Barranco Camp is set on a col (flat area) enclosed on three sides with steep 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 from 6 to 7 hours.

DAY 4 BARRANCO CAMP ~ BARAFU CAMP (15,200 ft./ 4,630 m)

The day begins with a scramble up the steep 'Barranco Wall', then we trek 3-4 hours and stop in the Karanga Valley for a hot lunch. In the afternoon 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 as a base camp from which you will

make your summit attempt at midnight tonight. Eat and drink as much as possible before retiring to your tent for rest and sleep.

DAY 5 BARAFU CAMP ~ UHURU PEAK(19,340 ft./5,895 mt.) ~ MWEKA CAMP(10,200 ft./3,110 m)

The steaming hot drink will arrive very early on this momentous day. A midnight wake-up call is the start of a juggernaut (12-17 hours of trekking). You begin trekking at 12:30 to 1am. The temperatures range from just below freezing at midnight, to between 10 deg. F (-12 deg. C) to -10 F. (-23 deg. C) just before dawn at the summit. The winding path of endless switchbacks will take form and shape in the shadows of the Ratzel and Rebmann glaciers at early dawn, and behind you the spires of Mawenzi will be silhouetted against the red glow of the sun from beneath the clouds. After about 6 hours of walking, you will come to the edge of the crater, at Stella Point, at 19,000 feet (5,790 mt.), which is the end of the steep track. From here, there is a gentle slope upward about 1 hour to Uhuru Peak. After a short time at the summit, descend the steep scree trail back to Barafu Camp for some rest, then again summon your strength for further descent to Mweka Camp for the night.

DAY 6 MWEKA CAMP ~ MWEKA GATE (6,000 ft. /1,830 m)

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