

KILIMANJARO – RONGAI ROUTE
~WITH CRATER CAMP~
8 DAYS / 7 NIGHTS on the mountain

Route Description:

The Rongai Trailhead is Kilimanjaro's only route beginning from the north side, and is used by few trekkers. It joins with the Marangu (Coca-Cola) Route on the final ascent to the summit, but otherwise few others are seen along the way. This route affords the opportunity to witness up-close the Mawenzi volcano, the second highest peak of Kilimanjaro, and the magnificent saddle between Mawenzi and Kibo Peak. This special version gets you as far away from the madding crowd as possible, by spending a night in the crater near the summit, for an up-close experience with Kilimanjaro's dwindling glaciers. This part of the experience sets this trek apart from any other. The Crater Camp is set in soft "beach" sand, and looking from the tent, trekkers can only see 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, and overall this trek is designed to get you closer to nature, and to experience Kilimanjaro in a way that so few others do. Due to the rugged terrain and the limited acclimatization time, fitness plays a huge role in the enjoyment and success of this trek. Each day you see many changes of vegetation and scenery, due to the rising terrain and decrease in precipitation. 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.

Daily Itinerary:

DAY 1 RONGAI GATE (6,550 ft./ 2,000 m) ~ RONGAI 1 CAVES CAMP (9,285 ft./ 2,830 m)

Departure from Arusha at 8am, about 5 hours drive (2 on rough roads) to the Rongai gate. After completion of administrative formalities and meeting with porters and guides, begin the 3 to 4 hour walk to the first camp. The

walk is at a leisurely pace through fields and then into the rain forest. Arrive at your camp set in the heather, to your mess tent and a hot meal.

DAY 2 RONGAI 1 CAVES CAMP ~ RONGAI 2 CAVES CAMP (11,300 ft./ 3,450 m)

About 4-5 hours trek through the heather will bring you to second caves. If the weather is clear, Mawenzi will be in plain view; a stunning sight. Enjoy stopping to see the exotic heather-zone flowers and plants which grow alongside the trail.

DAY 3 RONGAI 2 CAVES CAMP ~ KIKELEWA CAVES CAMP (11,800 ft./ 3600 m)

Today is a short trek designed to help you acclimatize. A smaller track leads off the main trail through the moorland and towards Mawenzi's steeply rising slopes. The trekking time is about 3 – 5 hours, arriving in camp for a hot lunch, and a chance to acclimatize while exploring the surrounding landscape of bizarre plants and rock formations and caves.

DAY 4 KIKELEWA CAVES CAMP ~ MAWENZI TARN CAMP (14,160 ft./ 4,315 m)

Trek from the moorland and eventually into the stark highland desert towards Mawenzi, on trails not frequented by many tourists. From the Tarn Campsite you will enjoy a magnificent view across the saddle towards Kibo; your final target. Total trekking time is 5-7 hours. A resupply of fresh food and supplies will reach camp this evening.

DAY 5 MAWENZI TARN CAMP ~ OUTWARD BOUND CAMP (15,585 ft./ 4,750 m)

The trekking time today is 5 - 7 hours, though a relatively easy hike across the wide saddle between Mawenzi and Kibo. The trek takes you across the massive saddle- the crossing is impressive and the landscape spectacularly

stark. Prepare all your gear for the next day ahead, and turn in early to rest.

**DAY 6 OUTWARD BOUND CAMP ~ UHURU PEAK (19,340 ft./ 5,895 m)
~ 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. From your camp to the rim of the crater (Gillman's Point (18,750 ft./ 5,712 m)) to Uhuru Peak, the trekking time is about 7 - 8 hours. The slope is steep, with switchbacks, over loose rock and scree with some boulders as you near Gilman's Point. You will stop at Hans Meyer cave on the way, the famous place where Kilimanjaro's first western climber described in his journals. Once you arrive at Gilman's Point at the edge of the crater, the trail to the summit is less demanding, and is reached after a further 1½-2 hours along the snowy crater rim (depending on the season). We arrive at the summit in the early afternoon hours, when there are no other tourists there at that time, and usually the best weather of the day. From the summit we take a short descent 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 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 ~ HOROMBO CAMP (10,200 ft./ 3,110 m)

We trek across the crater floor's lunar landscape, and once reaching Gilman's Point, we descend steeply to Kibo hut (about 3 hours) where we pause for rest & food, then another 3 to 4 hours to reach Horombo Camp. The trekking time from Crater Camp to Horombo camp will be from 6-9 hours.

DAY 8 HOROMBO CAMP ~ MARANGU GATE (5,900 ft./ 1,800 mt.)

Descend straight to the gate (5 - 6 hours), where you'll have lunch and will be awarded climbing certificates. Transfer back to Arusha for a much-welcomed shower!