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A COMPANION GUIDE

# The Kilimanjaro Preparation Guide

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*How to climb the Roof of Africa,  
slowly, safely, and changed.*

DISCOVER · EXPERIENCE · CONNECT

*Slow safaris for deep travellers*

## A LETTER, BEFORE WE BEGIN

# Karibu.

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Kilimanjaro has been on my horizon since I was a boy. I grew up in Tanzania, in a town where the mountain dominated the sky on clear mornings. I climbed it for the first time as a young biologist. I have climbed it many times since. And I have led many travellers up its slopes, slowly and carefully.

I wrote this guide because most Kilimanjaro information online is incomplete or misleading. Some companies undersell the difficulty. Others overstate it. Almost no one explains the inner preparation as carefully as the outer.

This guide aims to do both. It is honest about what the mountain asks of you. It is detailed about how to prepare your body. And it is quiet about something most guides skip entirely: how to prepare your mind for what summit night will actually feel like.

Read it slowly. Print it if that helps. Come back to it in the months before you climb. Whether you eventually climb with Teva or not, I want this guide to serve you. Kilimanjaro is one of the few mountains on earth that an ordinary person can summit. But only if you arrive properly prepared.

When you are ready to talk through any of it, I am one message away.

*With warmth from the foothills,*

**George Shango**

*Founder & Lead Guide, Teva EcoTravels*

WHAT'S INSIDE

# Ten chapters.

# One mountain.

*This guide is built to be read in order. Each chapter prepares you for the next. Together, they form a complete map of the journey ahead of you.*

**01**     *Is Kilimanjaro Right For You? An Honest Assessment*

**02**     *Choosing Your Route: Marangu, Machame, Lemosho*

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CHAPTER 01

# Is Kilimanjaro Right For You?

*An honest assessment before you commit.*

CHAPTER 01

# The honest question first.

Before you spend three months training and several thousand dollars, take a moment to consider honestly whether Kilimanjaro is the right mountain for you. Most travellers can climb Kilimanjaro. But not every traveller should.

## KILIMANJARO IS RIGHT FOR YOU IF...

- ✓ You are reasonably fit and willing to train for 12 weeks before the climb.
- ✓ You have no significant cardiovascular, respiratory, or neurological conditions.
- ✓ You are over 14 years old (the minimum age) and under 75 (a soft ceiling, but climbers in their 80s have summited).
- ✓ You can carry a 6-7 kg daypack for 5-7 hours per day.
- ✓ You can tolerate cold (down to minus 10 degrees Celsius on summit night).
- ✓ You are willing to spend up to 9 days disconnected from work, phone, and email.
- ✓ You are seeking a meaningful physical challenge, not a casual holiday.
- ✓ You can accept a 30 to 40 percent chance that you will not summit, even with perfect preparation.

## KILIMANJARO IS NOT RIGHT FOR YOU IF...

- × You have uncontrolled hypertension, heart disease, or recent cardiac events.
- × You have severe asthma or chronic respiratory conditions.
- × You are pregnant.
- × You have had recent surgery and have not been cleared by your doctor.
- × You cannot walk uphill for 4-5 hours continuously.
- × You are extremely afraid of cold or high altitude.
- × You are unable to commit to at least 8-10 weeks of physical preparation.
- × You have a strict deadline (a wedding, an exam) within 2 weeks of return.

### THE HONEST TRUTH ABOUT SUMMIT SUCCESS

*Industry-wide summit success on Kilimanjaro is 60 to 70 percent. On longer routes (7 to 8 days), success rises to 85 to 95 percent. On shorter routes (5 days), it drops to 50 to 60 percent. Teva clients on our recommended 7-day Machame route have an over 95 percent summit success, thanks to slow pacing and rigorous acclimatization.*



CHAPTER 02

# Choosing Your Route

*Marangu, Machame, Lemosho. Which path is yours?*

CHAPTER 02

# Three routes. Different journeys.

Kilimanjaro has seven established routes. Of those, three are practical for international travellers seeking high summit success: Marangu, Machame, and Lemosho. Below is the honest comparison.

## MARANGU ROUTE, 5 OR 6 DAYS

The oldest and most established route. Nicknamed the Coca-Cola Route because of its relative ease (and the availability of soft drinks at the huts). Accommodation is in mountain huts rather than tents, which some climbers prefer.

**Pros:** Most accessible. Hut accommodation. Generally, the cheapest option. The shortest path to the summit.

**Cons:** The 5-day version has the lowest summit success rate (around 50 percent) due to insufficient acclimatisation time. We strongly recommend adding an extra day for acclimatisation. Same path up and down, less variety.

**From: \$3,677 per person (5 days)**

## MACHAME ROUTE, 7 DAYS

Our most recommended route. Sometimes called the Whiskey Route. Steeper and more dramatic than Marangu, with significantly better acclimatisation. Camping throughout. Genuinely scenic, passing through all five climate zones with views unmatched by any other route.

**Pros:** Excellent acclimatisation profile (climb high, sleep low). Higher summit success rate (over 90 percent on our 7-day version). Most scenic route. Steady traffic but not overwhelming.

**Cons:** More physically demanding than Marangu. Camping (not huts). Slightly more expensive.

**From: \$4,200 per person (7 days)**

## LEMOSHO ROUTE, 8 DAYS

The slow pilgrim's path. Remote, beautiful, and lightly travelled. Starts on the western side of the mountain at higher altitude, with two days of gradual approach before the main ascent. Highest summit success rate of any

commercial route.

**Pros:** Highest summit success rate (around 95 percent). Lowest traffic in the early days. Best for travellers who want maximum acclimatisation and a deeper experience. Best for first-time high-altitude climbers.

**Cons:** Longest. Most expensive. Requires the most time commitment.

**From: \$4,800 per person (8 days)**

## OUR HONEST RECOMMENDATION

If you have the time and budget, choose Lemosho. The extra day of acclimatisation is the single most important factor in summit success. If you are time-constrained or budget-conscious, choose Machame, which offers excellent value and very strong success rates. We only recommend Marangu (5 days) for travellers with prior high-altitude experience.

### A QUIET TIP

*Whatever route you choose, do not skip an acclimatisation day to save money. The 7-day version of Machame outperforms the 5-day Marangu by approximately 40 percentage points in summit success. The extra day pays for itself many times over.*



CHAPTER 03

# The 12-Week Training Plan

*How to prepare your body, methodically.*

## CHAPTER 03

# Twelve weeks. Three pillars.

Kilimanjaro is not a technical climb. It does not require ropes, ice axes, or mountaineering experience. What it requires is endurance, leg strength, and a body that can handle 5 to 7 hours of walking, day after day, at progressively higher altitudes. Below is a 12-week training plan built around three pillars.

## PILLAR 1: CARDIOVASCULAR ENDURANCE

The single most important fitness component. Your goal is to walk 4 to 6 hours per day with a daypack on uneven terrain. To prepare:

- **Weeks 1 to 4:** 3 sessions per week, 30 to 45 minutes each. Brisk walking, light jogging, cycling, or swimming. Aim for moderate effort (you can speak in short sentences but not sing).
- **Weeks 5 to 8:** 4 sessions per week, 45 to 60 minutes each. Add at least 1 longer session per week (90 minutes). Begin walking on hills or inclined treadmill.
- **Weeks 9 to 12:** 4 to 5 sessions per week. Include at least 2 long hikes per week with a loaded daypack (4 to 6 hours, 6 kg pack). Stair climbing is excellent preparation.

## PILLAR 2: LEG STRENGTH

Your legs will carry you 70 to 100 kilometres in 7 days, much of it uphill and steeply downhill. Strength training reduces fatigue and injury risk. Focus on:

- **Squats** (bodyweight, then weighted). 3 sets of 15 repetitions, 2 to 3 times per week.
- **Lunges** (forward, reverse, lateral). 3 sets of 10 per leg, 2 to 3 times per week.
- **Step-ups** on a bench or sturdy chair (15 to 18 inches high). 3 sets of 15 per leg.
- **Calf raises**. 3 sets of 20 repetitions.
- **Core work** (planks, dead bugs, bird dogs). The core stabilises everything else.

## PILLAR 3: PACK-WEIGHTED HIKING

The most specific preparation you can do. Find a route with hills near your home. Walk it weekly, carrying a daypack loaded to approximately 6 kg (water bottles work well). The terrain matters less than the duration and

consistency. Aim to do at least one 4-to-6-hour weighted hike per week in the final 4 weeks before your climb.

#### THE SINGLE MOST OVERLOOKED TRAINING

*Train going downhill. Most climbers focus on uphill fitness and arrive at summit night underprepared for the descent. The descent from Uhuru Peak to Mweka Camp on summit day is over 1,400 metres of vertical drop. Train your knees and quadriceps to handle sustained downhill movement before you arrive.*



CHAPTER 04

# Gear and Packing

*What you actually need. Nothing more.*

## CHAPTER 04

# The honest packing list.

Most Kilimanjaro packing lists are too long. They are written by gear shops that profit from selling you things. Here is the list of what you actually need, organised by category.

## LAYERING SYSTEM (THE MOST IMPORTANT)

Kilimanjaro spans 5 climate zones. You go from tropical rainforest at the base to glacial summit conditions. You will not wear all your clothes at once. You will layer them up and down throughout the day. The layering system has 4 levels.

- **Base layer (next to skin):** Merino wool or synthetic thermal underwear, top and bottom. Bring 2 sets. Cotton is forbidden (it stays wet and cold).
- **Mid-layer (insulation):** Fleece jacket or lightweight down vest. Bring 1 to 2.
- **Insulating layer:** Down jacket or heavy synthetic puffer. Worn at high camps and on summit night. Bring 1 substantial one.
- **Outer shell (waterproof and windproof):** Hardshell jacket and pants. Gore-Tex or equivalent. Non-negotiable.

## FOOTWEAR

- **Hiking boots:** Mid-to-high ankle, waterproof, well broken in. NEVER bring new boots. Train in them for at least 50 hours before the climb.
- **Camp shoes:** Lightweight, comfortable. Worn at evening camps.
- **Hiking socks:** Merino wool. Bring 6 to 8 pairs. Change daily.
- **Sock liners:** Thin synthetic. Reduces blisters dramatically. Bring 4 pairs.
- **Gaiters:** Optional but useful for keeping snow and scree out of boots on summit day.

## HEAD, HANDS, FACE

- **Warm hat:** Wool or fleece. Covers ears completely.
- **Sun hat:** Wide brim. Lower mountain has intense UV.

- **Buff or neck gaiter:** Versatile, wind-blocking, can be worn many ways.
- **Liner gloves:** Thin, for everyday use.
- **Insulated gloves or mittens:** Heavy duty, for summit night. Mittens are warmer than gloves.
- **Sunglasses:** Category 4 (very dark). Snow blindness is real at altitude.
- **Headlamp:** Bright (300+ lumens) with spare batteries. Critical for summit night.

CHAPTER 04 · CONTINUED

# The rest of what you need.

## SLEEPING

- **Sleeping bag:** Rated to minus 18 degrees Celsius (0 degrees Fahrenheit). Down is lighter, synthetic is cheaper. We can rent these for you in Moshi if you do not want to fly with one.
- **Sleeping pad:** Provided by Teva (premium foam pads in all our tents).
- **Pillow:** A stuff sack with clothes works. Or bring a small inflatable.

## PACKING SYSTEM

- **Daypack:** 25 to 35 litres. You carry this every day. Carries water, snacks, layers, camera. Should fit comfortably.
- **Duffel bag:** 60 to 90 litres. Soft-sided, waterproof. Porters carry this. Maximum weight: 15 kg.
- **Dry bags:** Multiple sizes. Keep clothes and electronics dry on rainy days.
- **Stuff sacks:** Organise everything inside the duffel.

## WATER AND NUTRITION

- **Water bottles:** 3 litres total capacity. Use insulated bottles to prevent freezing on summit night.
- **Hydration bladder:** Optional but useful (2 to 3 litre Camelbak or equivalent).
- **Electrolyte tablets:** Important at altitude. Bring enough for daily use.
- **Energy snacks:** What you like. Nuts, dried fruit, energy bars, chocolate. Comfort food matters.

## MEDICAL AND PERSONAL

- **Personal medications:** Bring more than you need.
- **Diamox (acetazolamide):** Speak with your doctor. Strongly recommended for altitude prevention.
- **Ibuprofen or paracetamol:** For headaches and minor pains.
- **Imodium:** For digestive issues.
- **Throat lozenges:** Mountain air is dry and you will breathe hard.

- **Blister kit:** Compeed or Moleskin patches.
- **Sunscreen:** SPF 50+. The UV at altitude is extreme.
- **Lip balm:** With SPF.
- **Wet wipes and hand sanitiser:** Hot showers are not available.
- **Quick-dry travel towel:** Small.
- **Toilet paper:** Always carry your own.

#### WHAT TEVA PROVIDES

*We provide all camping equipment (tents, dining tent, kitchen, table, chairs, sleeping pads). All meals (three full meals daily plus snacks). All bottled and boiled drinking water on the mountain. Emergency oxygen. Pulse oximeter for daily health checks. Comprehensive first aid kits. You bring personal clothing and gear only.*



CHAPTER 05

# Altitude

*How it works. How to adapt.*

CHAPTER 05

# The thin air, explained.

Most climbers who fail to summit Kilimanjaro fail because of altitude, not fitness. The good news: with proper preparation and pacing, altitude can be managed. Below is what you need to know.

## HOW ALTITUDE AFFECTS THE BODY

At sea level, the air you breathe is approximately 21 percent oxygen at standard atmospheric pressure. As you climb, atmospheric pressure drops, even though the percentage of oxygen stays the same. At Kilimanjaro's summit (5,895 metres), there is roughly half the oxygen per breath that you have at sea level.

Your body adapts by producing more red blood cells, breathing faster, and circulating blood more efficiently. This adaptation takes time. Climbing too quickly skips this adaptation and causes altitude sickness.

## SYMPTOMS OF ACUTE MOUNTAIN SICKNESS (AMS)

AMS affects approximately 70 percent of climbers on Kilimanjaro to some degree. Mild AMS is manageable and expected. Severe AMS is dangerous and requires descent.

### MILD AMS (manageable):

- Mild headache (responds to water and ibuprofen)
- Mild nausea or appetite loss
- Slight dizziness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Mild shortness of breath during exertion

### SEVERE AMS (descend immediately):

- ! Severe persistent headache (does not respond to medication)
- ! Repeated vomiting
- ! Severe dizziness or confusion
- ! Difficulty walking in a straight line
- ! Persistent shortness of breath at rest

- ! Wet, gurgly cough (sign of HAPE)
- ! Severe disorientation (sign of HACE)

## HOW TO PREVENT ALTITUDE SICKNESS

- **Climb slowly.** The single most important factor. Pole pole (Swahili for 'slowly') is the mountain's motto for a reason.
- **Hydrate aggressively.** 4 to 5 litres of water per day. Yellow urine means you are dehydrated.
- **Eat enough.** Even when appetite drops. Carbohydrates are easier to digest at altitude than fats.
- **Consider Diamox.** Speak with your doctor. Most Teva climbers take it. It speeds acclimatisation significantly.
- **Climb high, sleep low.** Built into our recommended routes.
- **Communicate symptoms.** Tell your guide everything. Do not be brave or stoic. Honesty saves lives.
- **Avoid alcohol and sleeping pills.** Both impair breathing at altitude.

### OUR HEALTH MONITORING

*Every Teva climber receives twice-daily pulse oximetry readings (oxygen saturation and heart rate). Your lead guide is wilderness first-aid certified and trained in altitude medicine. We carry emergency oxygen and full evacuation insurance. Your safety is non-negotiable.*



CHAPTER 06

# What Each Day Will Feel Like

*An honest day-by-day emotional and physical preview.*

CHAPTER 06

# Seven days. Five climate zones.

## One vertical mile of becoming.

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Here is what each day on the mountain actually feels like, based on the Machame route. Other routes are similar in shape if different in detail.

**DAY 01**

### **Machame Gate (1,800m) to Machame Camp (3,000m)**

Walking time: 5 to 7 hours. Through dense rainforest. The air is thick with moisture. You will see colobus monkeys, hear birds you have never heard before, smell vegetation that feels prehistoric. You arrive at camp in mid-afternoon. Hot tea. Light dinner. Sleep deeply.

*Physical/emotional: Easy day physically. You feel strong. Spirits are high.*

**DAY 02**

### **Machame Camp to Shira Camp (3,840m)**

Walking time: 4 to 6 hours. Out of the rainforest into heather moorland. The landscape opens. You see Mount Meru behind you. You see Kibo (the main summit) ahead. The trail is steeper. You feel the altitude beginning. Late afternoon acclimatisation walk.

*Physical/emotional: Moderate exertion. First night above 3,500 metres. Your body begins adapting. Mild headache common.*

**DAY 03**

### **Shira Plateau to Lava Tower (4,630m) to Barranco Camp (3,950m)**

Walking time: 6 to 7 hours. Climb high to Lava Tower for lunch (4,630m). Most climbers feel altitude effects most strongly here. Descend to Barranco Camp. This 'climb high, sleep low' day is critical for acclimatisation.

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*Physical/emotional: Hardest day so far. Headache likely at Lava Tower, eases on descent. You arrive at Barranco feeling tired but accomplished.*

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**DAY 04**

### **Barranco Camp to Karanga Camp (3,995m)**

Walking time: 4 to 5 hours. Start with the famous Barranco Wall (an exhilarating scramble, more confidence-building than technical). Cross alpine valleys. Shorter day, designed to preserve energy.

*Physical/emotional: Surprisingly enjoyable. Most climbers say the Barranco Wall is a highlight, not a challenge. Mood improves.*

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**DAY 05**

### **Karanga to Barafu Camp (4,673m)**

Walking time: 4 to 5 hours. Steady ascent through alpine desert. The landscape becomes lunar, almost Martian. Arrive at Barafu in early afternoon. Eat. Sleep. Summit attempt begins at midnight.

*Physical/emotional: Tense afternoon. Many climbers cannot eat or sleep well. This is normal. Adrenaline begins.*

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**DAY 06**

### **SUMMIT NIGHT: Barafu to Uhuru Peak (5,895m), descend to Mweka (3,100m)**

Walking time: 11 to 14 hours. The hardest day of the climb (and possibly your life). Wake at 11pm. Begin at midnight. Climb by headlamp in extreme cold. Summit at dawn. Descend over 2,800 metres in one day.

*Physical/emotional: See Chapter 7 for the honest truth about summit night.*

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**DAY 07**

### **Mweka Camp to Mweka Gate (1,640m), return to Moshi**

Walking time: 3 to 4 hours. Through the rainforest one final time. Receive your summit certificate at the gate. Vehicle back to Moshi. A long hot shower. A celebration dinner with the team.

*Physical/emotional: Exhausted but euphoric. The mountain has done its work.*

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CHAPTER 07

# Summit Night

*The honest truth, written by someone who has seen it many times.*

CHAPTER 07

# The night that will change you.

I will be honest with you. Summit night is harder than the brochures suggest. It is also more transformative than the brochures know how to describe. Below is what it actually feels like, hour by hour, written by someone who has guided dozens of climbers through it.

## 11:00 PM. WAKING AT BARAFU CAMP (4,673m)

You have been trying to sleep since 6pm. You probably did not really sleep. Your guide wakes you with hot tea. You force down breakfast (biscuits, porridge, more tea). Your body does not want food. You eat anyway. You put on every layer you own. Headlamp on. Gloves. The cold outside is breathtaking.

## MIDNIGHT. DEPARTURE FROM BARAFU

The line of climbers stretches up the mountain in front of you, headlamps bobbing like fireflies. Your guide walks behind you, watching your pace, your breathing, your steadiness. The temperature is around minus 5 degrees Celsius. It will drop to minus 15 or colder before dawn.

## 12:00 to 3:00 AM. THE LONG CLIMB

Three hours of relentless, slow, steep ascent. The trail switchbacks endlessly up scree and loose stone. Your breath is loud in your own ears. Your pace is glacial. You will want to stop. Your guide will not let you stop for long, because stopping in this cold is dangerous.

This is the hardest part of the climb. Most climbers who turn back turn back here. This is also where the mountain begins teaching its real lesson: that you are stronger than you knew, that you can keep moving past the point where you thought you could not.

## 3:00 to 5:00 AM. STELLA POINT (5,756m)

Stella Point is a false summit on the crater rim. It is where most climbers feel the first wave of euphoria. The hardest climbing is behind you. You can see the curvature of the earth on the horizon. The sky is beginning to lighten in the east.

## 5:30 AM. UHURU PEAK (5,895m)

The final 45 minutes from Stella Point to Uhuru Peak feels strangely easy, as if the mountain has decided you have proven yourself. The trail is nearly flat. The glacier appears on your right, ancient and luminous. And then, suddenly, the sign: UHURU PEAK, 5,895m, AFRICA'S HIGHEST POINT.

You will probably cry. Most people do. Not because of the view, although the view is extraordinary. Because of what just happened inside you.

*"I have not been still for that long in my whole adult life," is what one of my climbers told me at Uhuru Peak in 2024. He was a CEO from Frankfurt. He was sixty-two years old. He had never wept in front of another man before. He wept that morning. We stood there together as the sun broke the horizon.*

## 6:00 to 11:00 AM. THE DESCENT

The descent from Uhuru Peak to Barafu Camp, then on to Mweka Camp, is its own challenge. You have been awake for over 12 hours. The adrenaline is gone. Your legs are exhausted. You will be tempted to rush. Resist. The descent is where most injuries happen.

At Barafu Camp you eat a quick breakfast and rest for an hour. Then you continue down to Mweka Camp at 3,100 metres. The air gets thicker with every step. By the time you reach Mweka in mid-afternoon, you will sleep harder than you have ever slept.

### WHAT YOU CARRY HOME

*Most climbers describe summit night as the most difficult thing they have ever done. They also describe it as the most clarifying. Something gets reorganised inside you on that long midnight climb. You will not be able to explain it to people back home. They will not understand. That is fine. The mountain understands.*



CHAPTER 08

# Preparing Your Mind

*The preparation most climbers skip entirely.*

CHAPTER 08

# The inner work.

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Most climbers train their bodies for 12 weeks and forget to train their minds at all. This is a mistake. Kilimanjaro is at least as much a mental climb as a physical one. Below are the inner practices that improve summit success and the depth of what you take home.

## PRACTICE 1: SLOW DOWN BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

In the week before your climb, slow your life down. Reduce screens. Take walks without your phone. Sit quietly for 10 minutes a day. The mountain runs at one speed, and that speed is much slower than your everyday life. The closer your nervous system is to that speed when you arrive, the less adjustment you will need.

## PRACTICE 2: ACCEPT DISCOMFORT IN ADVANCE

You will be cold. You will be tired. You will have a headache. You will be hungry at moments and unable to eat at others. Accepting these things before the climb makes them easier to bear during the climb. Resistance amplifies discomfort. Acceptance dissolves it.

## PRACTICE 3: LET GO OF THE OUTCOME

Some climbers summit. Some do not. The summit is not the point. The journey is the point. Climbers who fixate on summiting often struggle when difficulties arise. Climbers who hold the summit loosely tend to summit more often, and to enjoy the climb more deeply whether they reach the top or not.

## PRACTICE 4: TRAIN ATTENTION, NOT JUST FITNESS

On long training hikes, practice paying attention to one breath, one footstep, one stretch of trail. This is the mental skill that sustains you on summit night, when the body has nothing left to give and only attention keeps you moving.

## PRACTICE 5: BRING SOMETHING TO CARRY UP

Many of our climbers bring something to the summit that holds meaning. A photograph of a parent who passed. A note from a child. A small stone from somewhere significant. Carrying something gives the climb a personal dimension that pure athleticism does not. It also gives you a reason to keep climbing when reasons matter most.

**A QUIET TIP**

*On summit night, when you want to stop, choose a small, fixed point ahead of you (a rock, a tree, a curve in the trail) and walk to it. When you reach it, choose another. Do not think about the summit. Do not think about how much further. One small target at a time. This is how the mountain is climbed.*



CHAPTER 09

# The Practical

*Cost, vaccines, insurance, visas, and other earthly matters.*

CHAPTER 09

# The boring chapter. Still useful.

## COST BREAKDOWN

A Kilimanjaro climb with a reputable operator costs \$3,500 to \$5,000 per person, depending on route and tier. Below is what you are actually paying for.

COMPONENT	PERCENTAGE	WHAT IT COVERS
Park fees	30 to 35%	Mandatory government fees per climber
Guide and porter wages	30 to 35%	Staff costs, paid at IMEC-certified rates
Food and equipment	15 to 20%	All meals, camping gear, cooking equipment
Transport and logistics	5 to 10%	Transfers, equipment movement
Operator overhead and profit	10 to 15%	Office costs, insurance, margin

## VACCINATIONS

Speak with a travel health clinic 6 to 8 weeks before your trip. Recommended vaccinations include:

- Yellow Fever (required if arriving from a yellow fever country, otherwise recommended)
- Hepatitis A and B
- Typhoid
- Tetanus and Diphtheria (ensure up to date)
- Routine immunisations (measles, polio, etc.)
- Rabies (consider for extended stays)

## INSURANCE

Travel insurance for Kilimanjaro must specifically cover trekking up to 6,000 metres. Most standard travel insurance does not. Confirm with your provider. Required coverage includes:

- Medical evacuation (must include helicopter rescue from altitude)
- Trip cancellation (covers your investment if illness prevents travel)
- Trip interruption (covers if you must abandon the climb early)
- Personal effects (covers lost or stolen gear)

## VISA AND ENTRY

Most nationalities can purchase a Tanzania tourist visa on arrival at Kilimanjaro International Airport (\$50, valid 90 days). US citizens pay \$100 for a multi-entry visa. Alternatively, apply online in advance through [eservices.immigration.go.tz](https://eservices.immigration.go.tz)

## TIPPING

Tipping is customary and significant on Kilimanjaro. It supplements modest base wages and is a meaningful part of the team's annual income. Suggested amounts, per climber:

- **Lead guide:** \$20 to \$25 per day
- **Assistant guide:** \$15 to \$20 per day
- **Cook:** \$12 to \$15 per day
- **Porter:** \$10 to \$12 per day per porter (you typically have 3 to 4)



CHAPTER 10

# After the Mountain

*What comes home with you. Forever.*

## CHAPTER 10

# The descent that never quite ends.

You will come down from Kilimanjaro changed. This is not a marketing claim. It is what every honest guide observes in every honest climber. Below is what you might expect in the weeks and months that follow.

## THE FIRST WEEK

Your body will feel both exhausted and electric. You will sleep deeply. You will eat more than usual. You will notice your breath at sea level, how easy it suddenly is. You will probably tell the story of summit night to friends, and watch them not quite understand. That is fine. The mountain does not need them to understand.

## THE FIRST MONTH

Photographs will not do it justice. You will look at images of the summit and feel something the camera missed. You will return to small frustrations of daily life with a new perspective. A traffic jam will not bother you the way it used to. A difficult colleague will seem less significant. You climbed Kilimanjaro. The mountain is now part of how you measure things.

## THE FIRST YEAR

Many climbers tell me that Kilimanjaro becomes the doorway to other changes. Career shifts. Relationship clarifications. Health choices. Trips they had been postponing. The mountain teaches that more is possible than you previously believed. That lesson tends to apply to other parts of life.

## WHAT THE MOUNTAIN GIVES YOU

- ✓ Quiet confidence in your own resilience
- ✓ A new baseline for what counts as difficulty
- ✓ Proof that slowness sometimes outperforms speed
- ✓ A relationship with cold, altitude, exhaustion that you did not have before
- ✓ A handful of guides, porters, and fellow climbers you will not forget
- ✓ A photograph at Uhuru Peak that you will keep visible somewhere you can see it

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## OUR PROMISE TO YOU AFTER THE CLIMB

Two weeks after your return, George will write to you personally. Not a marketing email. A letter, asking how you are settling back into your life. We do this because climbing Kilimanjaro is not a transaction. It is a relationship. We do not consider the climb complete until you have settled into what you have brought home with you.

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## READY TO CLIMB?

If this guide has answered your questions, and you are ready to begin planning your climb, there are three ways to begin.

**01**

### Send a detailed enquiry

Email [george@tevaecotravels.com](mailto:george@tevaecotravels.com) with your preferred dates, route preference, and group size. Custom proposal within 48 hours.

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**02**

### Book a free 30-minute call

Talk through your readiness with George directly. Particularly useful if you have any health concerns or are weighing route options.

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**03**

### Apply for a small group climb

We host 2 to 3 small group climbs per year for solo travellers and couples wanting to climb with others. Application opens 6 months in advance.

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## A FINAL WORD

# Pole pole. (Slowly, slowly.)

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Pole pole is the Kilimanjaro guides' motto. It means slowly, slowly. It is the secret of the mountain. It is also, I have come to believe, the secret of much else in life.

Most climbers come to Kilimanjaro thinking they will conquer it. The wise ones come willing to let the mountain conquer them. The first version often fails. The second version often succeeds and brings back something that lasts.

Take your time with this guide. Train slowly. Pack carefully. Choose your route with thought. And when you arrive, remember what the mountain teaches before you have even started climbing: that you are about to discover something you did not know you were looking for.

Karibu sana. You are very welcome.

### ***George Shango***

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