

Earthbound Expeditions

Mt Meru and Kilimanjaro Machermo Climb

13 days, from US$3,471 per person

Duration	Group size	Country
13 days	**No limit**	**Tanzania**

Mt Meru and Kilimanjaro Machermo Climb Overview

Climb Mt Meru and Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa

Climbing the highest peak in Africa

Combining the ascent of Mt Meru with the Kilimanjaro summit climb is an excellent way to reach the top of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa at about 5,895 metres above sea level. This itinerary is designed carefully to give you the best chance of reaching the summit of Kilimanjaro.

Mt Meru lies in the heart of Arusha National Park, 43 miles west of Mount Kilimanjaro, and is considered the best mountain for acclimatisation before climbing Kilimanjaro. Climbing Meru is also demanding in its own right. The ascent passes through different types of vegetation: dry forest on the lower slopes gives way to dense mountain forest and then to alpine terrain.

After the summit of Mount Meru, you move on directly to Kilimanjaro, the more demanding of the two mountains. The climb follows the Machame Route, one of the seven official trekking routes and one of the most beautiful. It is more demanding than the other routes, but also the most scenic.

The sunrise from the summits of these two mountains is the main highlight of the trip. You can also enjoy the wildlife of Arusha National Park. This climb is also good preparation if you plan to climb higher mountains elsewhere in the world.

Itinerary

Day 1

Transfer from Kilimanjaro International Airport to Moshi

Transfer from Kilimanjaro International Airport to Moshi (time and flight details to be confirmed). Pre-climb briefing on the trek. Overnight in Moshi.

Altitude: 890 m On foot: None, arrival day Night: Hotel, Moshi Meals: Dinner

Day 3

Trek to Saddle Hut

We continue through the forest on a steeper climb than the previous day, and the path winds up through the rainforest. If it has been raining, some of the steeper sections may be muddy, so care is needed. A clearing in the trees on Elephant Ridge offers good views of the summit and down into the crater. We continue up through grassy clearings to Saddle Hut (3570m), on a wide col between the slopes of Meru and Little Meru. The short walk to the summit of Little Meru is worthwhile for the views across to Meru's summit. Overnight at Saddle Hut (3570m).

Altitude: 3,570 m On foot: 3–4 hrs Night: Hut, Saddle Hut Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Summit Mt Meru at sunrise and descend to Miriakamba Hut

After a quick breakfast at about 2 am, we start the walk to the summit by the light of our head torches, aiming to watch the sunrise over Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain, and the African plains from the top. After about an hour we reach Rhino Point, which has good views across to Kilimanjaro and down to the base of the ash cone. From Rhino Point there is a short scramble over rocks onto the crater rim. We reach the summit at about 7 am. After signing the summit register under the Tanzanian flag, we spend some time on the summit and then begin the long descent to Miriakamba Hut. It is a long day, but good preparation for the bigger climb ahead. Overnight at Miriakamba Hut (2470m).

Altitude: 4,566 m at Socialist Peak On foot: 10–12 hrs Night: Hut, Miriakamba Hut Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Descend to Meru Gate and drive to Moshi

After breakfast, we descend to Meru Gate, where we collect our certificates, and then drive through Arusha National Park on a game drive. We arrive in Moshi in the evening.

Altitude: 890 m On foot: 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Moshi Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Drive to Machame Gate and trek to Machame Camp

You meet your head guide for the climb at the Mountain Inn reception. You then drive from Mountain Inn to the Machame park gate, a journey of 40 minutes, which takes you to an altitude of 1800m on the south-western slopes of Kilimanjaro. Here you complete the registration formalities (registering passport numbers, receiving permits, etc.) and meet the rest of your support team. The day's walk takes you through the mountain's rainforest zone, with its plants and wildlife and varied scenery. After a picnic lunch on the way, you continue to Machame Camp at 3000m. The day's trek usually takes 5 to 7 hours. Dinner is served at the campsite. Overnight at Machame Camp.

Altitude: 3,000 m On foot: 5–7 hrs Night: Tented camp, Machame Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Trek to the Shira Plateau and Shira Camp

Breakfast. Today you set off towards the Shira Plateau, leaving the forest behind and entering the heather and moorland zone, where temperatures can drop below 0°C. At this altitude, most moisture comes from fog and mist. You trek along a ridge of volcanic rock, with a short scramble up a rock 'wall' close to the plateau. You stop for a picnic lunch at Picnic Rock (3600m) and continue past the Shira Caves to Shira Camp at 3800m. The campsite has good views: the Shira Ridge lies to the west, with its three pinnacles (Shira Needle, Shira Cathedral and East Shira Hill). To the east you may see Kibo's Western Breach and its glaciers. On clear days you can also see Mount Meru in the distance to the south-west. The day's trek usually takes 5 to 7 hours. Dinner is served at the campsite. Overnight at Shira Camp.

Altitude: 3,800 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Tented camp, Shira Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Shira Camp via Lava Tower to Barranco Camp

Breakfast. From Shira, the route turns sharply east and heads directly towards Kibo and its Western Breach. Today you enter the alpine zone, which receives little water and has cold nights and intense daytime sun. You climb steadily to a high point of 4530m near the Lava Tower, with views of the surrounding cliffs and rock formations throughout the day. You have a picnic lunch on the way and then spend the final few hours descending steeply into the Barranco valley, finishing at an altitude of 3950m. This is only 150m higher than your starting point, but you will have climbed and descended 680m, which helps your body adjust to the lower oxygen levels. The day's trek usually takes 5 to 7 hours. Dinner is served. Overnight at Barranco Camp.

Altitude: 3,950 m On foot: 6–7 hrs Night: Tented camp, Barranco Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Barranco Wall to Karanga Camp

Breakfast. Today is designed to help your acclimatisation further. A steep climb up the Barranco Wall leads to a trail on the south-eastern side of Kibo, with good views of the southern ice fields. You remain in the alpine zone today, where the terrain changes to scree and there is very little plant or animal life. The height gain is only 300m for the day, with a picnic lunch on the way to Karanga Camp at 4200m. You should arrive by early afternoon, which gives you time to rest before the next 24 hours, which will be the

longest part of the climb. The day's trek usually takes 4 hours. Dinner is served at the campsite. Overnight at Karanga Camp.

Altitude: 4,200 m On foot: 4 hrs Night: Tented camp, Karanga Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Trek from Karanga Camp to Barafu Camp

Breakfast. Today is the start of your summit attempt, which begins at midnight tonight. You leave Karanga and follow an easy path on compacted scree, with some steep sections over rocky slabs. After the Karanga valley, the path meets the Mweka trail, which you will use for the descent the following day. You turn left at the junction and head up to Barafu Camp at 4600m, with a picnic lunch on the way. The day's trek usually takes 4 to 5 hours. At the campsite, the chef prepares your last meal before the summit in mid-afternoon. We recommend that you sleep after dinner until your guides wake you for the summit attempt at around midnight. Overnight at Barafu Camp.

Altitude: 4,600 m On foot: 4–5 hrs Night: Tented camp, Barafu Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11

Summit via Stella Point to Uhuru Peak and descend to Mweka Camp

At midnight (00:00), your guides wake you for the summit attempt. The early start allows you to reach the summit at around sunrise and still descend in daylight. You walk in single file, ascending in a zigzag pattern because of the steepness, through the scree and into the arctic zone of the mountain. The climb to Stella Point is the most demanding section of the Machame Route, mainly because of the altitude, the darkness and the many hours of walking beforehand, but there are no technical difficulties. Keep going at a steady pace and tell the guides about any symptoms of altitude sickness. They are trained to recognise mild, moderate and severe altitude sickness and will advise you whether you can continue ascending or should stop and descend. You reach Stella Point at 5730m. Here you take a short rest, and those who are still feeling strong continue to Uhuru Peak at 5895m, passing glaciers and ice cliffs. At Uhuru Peak, once you have taken your photographs by the sign, you do not stay long: our guides advise a maximum of 10 to 15 minutes before you begin your descent to Mweka. The scree is very loose underfoot, and you may find descending harder than ascending. Two walking poles are useful here, and the guides can show you a technique to almost 'ski' down. You follow the same path you used on the ascent as far as Barafu Camp, where you have a hot lunch. You then continue down to the Mweka junction, take the path to Mweka and descend through the heather and moorland to the top of the forest, where Mweka Camp lies at 3000m. The walk from Barafu to Stella Point usually takes 5 to 6 hours, the walk to Uhuru Peak a further 1 to 2 hours, and the descent to Mweka 5 to 7 hours. Dinner is served at Mweka Camp. Overnight at Mweka Camp.

Altitude: 5,895 m at Uhuru Peak On foot: 13–15 hrs Night: Tented camp, Mweka Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

Descend from Mweka Camp to Moshi

Breakfast. This is your final day on the mountain. You leave Mweka Camp and trek south through the mountain forest to Mweka Gate, with a picnic lunch on the way. At the gate, your support team will be waiting to congratulate you and say goodbye. This is a good opportunity to give any tips to the team. The guides and porters may sing the 'Kilimanjaro song' before they say goodbye and introduce you to your driver, who transfers you back to Mountain Inn. On arrival, collect your room key and enjoy a warm shower after 6 days without one. Rest for the remainder of the day until dinner is served. Overnight in Moshi.

Altitude: 890 m On foot: 10 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Hotel, Moshi Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13

Departure

Breakfast. We take you to the airport for your departure. Our services end today.

Altitude: 890 m On foot: None, departure day Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- 3 nights' accommodation on a full-board basis
- Kilimanjaro National Park (KINAPA) and Mt Meru conservation fees (entry fees)
- Kilimanjaro National Park compulsory rescue fees
- Kilimanjaro National Park camping fees
- Trained and certified English-speaking guide(s)
- Trained and certified porters (1 porter per person for personal mountain luggage, maximum 15 kg)
- Trained and certified cook, with utensils, cutlery, crockery, etc.
- All meals on the mountain on a full-board basis
- Camping chairs, tables and dining tent
- Lightweight dome tent, shared between two people
- Three- or four-season lightweight single dome tent for the tour leader
- 1 transfer per group from Moshi to the park gate
- 1 transfer per group from the park gate to Moshi
- Safe and luggage storage at Mountain Inn while you are on the trek
- Boiled drinking water on the trek
- Basic first aid kit per group
- Additional acclimatisation day at Karanga
- 1 transfer from Kilimanjaro International Airport (JRO) to Moshi

Not included

- Tips
- International flights in and out
- Additional transfers from the park gate to Moshi
- Extra nights' accommodation
- Drinks such as soft drinks and alcohol
- Metal water bottles, water bladders, etc. (please note: soft plastics are not permitted on the mountain)
- Personal items

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/mt-meru-and-kilimanjaro-machermo-climb