AFRICAN SCENERY
TOURS



KILIMANJARO FQA AND CLIMBING TIPS

Are you planning your first Kilimanjaro trip ever? Then, you probably have many questions. Which destination to choose, what to pack, what to wear, do I need vaccines?

Planning a safari trip many seem overwhelming, but with a bit of research and our help, you can get your itinerary ready in a quick and easy way!





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1.How Do I Train to Climb Kilimanjaro.?



Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro is a physical undertaking, so you should prepare yourself accordingly with a Kilimanjaro training program. Being in good shape is important in many respects. Obviously, strong, conditioned legs make it easier to walk uphill and downhill for sustained periods of time. General aerobic fitness allows the body to function efficiently with less oxygen. And a fit body is more likely to withstand the stress of consecutive days of hiking and camping. Finally, a positive mental attitude can work wonders for you when fatigue and doubts arise.

How Fit Do I Need to be to Climb Kilimanjaro?



That's a difficult question to answer because it's different for every individual.
We know there are some who didn't train much and fared very well. Then there are others who engaged in a lengthy, disciplined training program and succumbed to the altitude in a few days. Marathon runners have told us that climbing Kilimanjaro is the hardest thing they've ever done. While couch potatoes said it was easier than they thought it would be

The best advice we can give is to get yourself in the best hiking shape.
In a survey we administered, on a scale of 1 (easy) to 10 (difficult), respondents rated their climb with an average difficulty of 7. So take the climb seriously and train adequately, as described below. The mountain is a big unknown, and you won't know with certainty how you will react until you are there.

Hiking is the Best Exercise to Prepare for Kilimanjaro

here are training regimens on other operator's sites which entail strict, extensive, cross-training programs, featuring hiking, running, biking, swimming, weight training, etc. Do not be alarmed by this. Those programs are excessive and unnecessary.
To sufficiently prepare for climbing Kilimanjaro, the best and perhaps only exercise you need to do is hiking – period. After all, that is what you will be doing on the mountain. Ideally, you should try to hike as much as possible on hills or mountains to simulate climbing Kilimanjaro.



Remember that on Mount Kilimanjaro, you will walk slowly for prolonged periods and carry probably no more than 20 lbs. in your day pack (usually it'll be closer to 15 lbs.). Therefore, in your training, it is better to increase the time interval/distance and keep a slow pace than to shorten the time interval/distance and increase the pace. (But if you've never hiked before, you should start with short time intervals, a slow pace, and no weight in your day pack and then gradually increase all of the above as your fitness level improves.)

What Kind of Hikes Should I Do to Train?

We recommend training three times a week, for at least one hour per session, at a minimum. The distance, duration and elevation gain of your sessions are mostly going to be dictated by what kind of trails are accessible for you in your area. An ideal trail would be a few miles with a nice uphill section that you could finish in an hour or so. Try to find something that is convenient for you so you can schedule regular training sessions and track your progress.

Try to find the time to do longer day hikes as well. This is superb training. A solid day hike would be a four to six hour hike with moderate elevation changes (~1,000 ft/305 m) while carrying a 20 lb. pack. But if you can do harder trails, then by all means go for it.



What if I Don't Have Trails to Train On?

For those who do not have access to trails, the next best option is to train on stairs. You can also train very productively on a stair master machine. Remember that the goal is to simulate climbing Kilimanjaro, so wear your pack and go at a slow pace for a long time. We recommend climbing stairs or using a StairMaster for 1-2 hours, at 30 steps per minute while carrying a 20 lb. pack.



Test Your Gear While Training

It is imperative that during Kilimanjaro training, you wear the boots that you intend to climb with so that they are sufficiently broken-in (to prevent blisters). Also, you should wear the day pack you intend to carry so your shoulders/back/hips get used to the points of contact and weight (to minimize chafing and soreness). While you're at it, try wearing all your other gear – base layers, trekking pants, caps, etc. – while you train. If some piece of gear doesn't work for you, it's better to know now rather than on the mountain.



Do I Need to Do Any Other Exercises?

As for the other types of exercise, we can confidently say that you don't need them. Focus on hiking. If you are already getting plenty of hiking in, then you can add other types of exercise as a secondary or supplemental activity. But these other activities should not replace your hiking training. If you decide to cross train, then we would suggest doing these. Running, to further improve cardiovascular fitness and aerobic capacity. And weightlifting, to gain more strength in your legs.



How Long Do I Need to Train for Kilimanjaro?

You should start training for climbing Kilimanjaro at least two months prior to your departure. However, this recommendation changes significantly based upon your current fitness level and hiking ability. From our experience, we can group our clients into three general categories.

1. Active Hikers



These people are avid hikers or backpackers. They may or may not have experience at high altitude, but they're generally aware of how their body responds to hiking uphill and downhill, the pace they can maintain, and how to refuel and recover.
Active hikers probably do not need to change much in order to get ready for Kilimanjaro. They're already in good hiking shape, so training is about getting in better hiking shape. For them, we would suggest doing some harder hikes and long day hikes with big elevation gains. Basically, turn up the intensity, distance and duration to get even stronger.

2. Active Non-Hikers

These are your average healthy people who have a normal exercise regimen. They might go to the gym a few times a week to lift weights, do Crossfit, or take cardio classes. Or they might be runners, swimmers or bikers. They're considered to be fit people. But they don't hike. Active non-hikers are in good shape but are probably not in hiking shape. So, the goal for them is to get their bodies to be more suited for climbing Kilimanjaro. Therefore, they should shift their training away from their usual exercise to hiking. We would recommend this group train for more than two months, perhaps three to six months, depending on the starting point for cardiovascular endurance.

3. Non-Active People

This is essentially everyone else. This is your typical sedentary individual who does not exercise on a regular basis. If this describes you, don't worry! We have guided plenty of people in this situation to the top without any significant problems. But, we don't want to sugarcoat anything either. You'll have to get in shape to have a fair chance at success. Non-active people should start training early. We suggest training six to 12 months for your climb, gradually improving your fitness. Be careful not to overdo it as injuries are a big setback. Begin with light workouts with plenty of rest in between sessions and slowly ramp up as your trip date approaches. This group can incorporate walking, jogging and weight training as the initial goal is to achieve decent overall fitness first. Then for the latter half of the total training period, they can transition to specializing on hiking training. For everyone, the longest/hardest workouts should be performed two to four weeks before departure. During the last two weeks, you should taper off your training and in the Final days, rest so that your body has time to recover before your actual climb. At this point, it's more important to stay healthy and injury free, than to get a few more sessions in.

2.How Can I Prepare for Kilimanjaro's High Altitude?

Getting your body in great shape through exercise certainly helps prepare you for altitude.

This is the number one thing you should do – be in the best physical condition as possible for your climb. By being in excellent fitness, the rigors of multiday hiking will cause less stress on your body. Then, the body can focus its energy on acclimatization. However, the ability to acclimatize to altitude is largely genetic. As the Kilimanjaro climbing success rates show, some people can climb Kilimanjaro in as little as 5 days (not recommended), while some still fail with 8 days. It is impossible to tell how well a prospective climber may fare in an oxygen deprived atmosphere until he or she is actually in it. So, what can someone do to pre-acclimatize, or prepare for Kilimanjaro's altitude, before the climb?

Stay at Higher Altitude



If you live in a high-altitude town, you are fortunate.
You already have a base of acclimatization for the elevation you reside. To add on top of it, regularly hike to even higher places to get your body familiar with lower oxygen levels. This schedule would be excellent for building long-term acclimatization for Kilimanjaro.

But for the rest of us who live at or near sea level, you may need to travel for high altitude exposure. Note that a short stay at high elevation would not directly improve your acclimatization for Kilimanjaro unless it is done immediately before your climb (a few days). But, it is still worth doing. Having some experience at high altitude is better than having none. Therefore if you can visit a mountain town or elevated place while preparing for Kilimanjaro, we encourage it. The higher the altitude, the longer the stay, and the more active you are, the more you will learn about how you respond to a hypoxic environment.

Use Altitude Training Systems



High altitude training systems enable climbers to pre-acclimatize at home, drastically improving the success rate, safety and enjoyment of the climb.
Altitude training systems simulate high altitudes to induce beneficial biological adaptations in the body. Besides going to (and staying in) high altitude places, using a high altitude training system is only way to pre-acclimatize to high altitude before your trip.

Everyone can benefit from using altitude training systems to pre-acclimatize to the high altitude. The altitude training system reduces the percentage of oxygen in the air you breathe. Through regular use, the body undergoes physiological changes to cope with the lower oxygen level.Without pre-acclimatization, as climbers ascend on Kilimanjaro, their bodies respond with short-term adaptations. These quick-response adaptations are meant primarily to prevent sickness and allow for some semblance of normal cardiovascular and muscular performance in an oxygen deprived environment.

Pre-acclimatization through altitude training systems produces long-term adaptations, such as an increase in red blood cells, blood volume, and efficiency of oxygen absorption.

These adaptations help:

1.Reduce the Incidence of Acute Mountain Sickness. Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) is the main reason climbers fail on Mount Kilimanjaro. Most people will experience some symptoms of AMS. Pre-acclimatization can reduce or eliminate symptoms of AMS.

2.Increase performance on the mountain. Pre-acclimatization significantly improves the body's mechanisms for delivering oxygen to the muscles. The result is increased aerobic and anaerobic performance on Kilimanjaro, such as hiking strength and endurance.

3.Increase recovery on the mountain. Breathing rates and oxygen intake decreases when the body is asleep. In an oxygen deficient environment, many people have difficulty sleeping. Pre-acclimatization enables people to sleep well, and thus, recover after physical activity.

Hypoxico Altitude Systems



Hypoxico is the leading manufacturer of altitude training systems. Their altitude training systems allow climbers to pre-acclimatize in the comfort of their own home. The system can be used either during sleep, during rest, or during exercise.

The most effective training method is pre-acclimatize while sleeping. Climbers simply sleep inside the tent overnight. Zippered doors are on both sides of the tent for easy entry and exit. Note that the enclosure is not air tight and is not intended to be. The generator pushes air with reduced oxygen content into the tent, forcing the normal oxygenated air out of the tent.

We recommend sleeping overnight for 6-8 hours at a simulated altitude of 10,500 feet for 6-8 weeks for proper pre-acclimatization for Kilimanjaro. Climbers can also pre-acclimatize while exercising by wearing an exercise mask during light workouts. To achieve benefits, it is enough to spend 30-40 minutes on a bike, elliptical or treadmill for 3-4 times a week. We recommend exercising at a simulated altitude of 10,500 feet for 6-8 weeks for proper pre-acclimatization for Kilimanjaro. These sessions are not meant to replace normal workouts, but are in addition to regular workouts in your Kilimanjaro training program.

Conclusion

Pre-acclimatization is very beneficial. It is like getting a head start or lowering the mountain for you. In fact, every single client we know of who has used a high-altitude system for training summited Kilimanjaro. Realistically, we understand that unless you already live at altitude, pre-acclimatization is very inconvenient and/or expensive. Most of our clients do not make special plans to travel to high altitude or use an altitude system, regardless of how helpful it may be. So, if you can't pre-acclimatize, don't worry. Our itineraries, especially those that are 7 days or more, are designed so that an average person can successfully and safely make it to the top without any prior high-altitude exposure.

3.Can I Training with an Altitude Mask Help Me Climb Kilimanjaro?

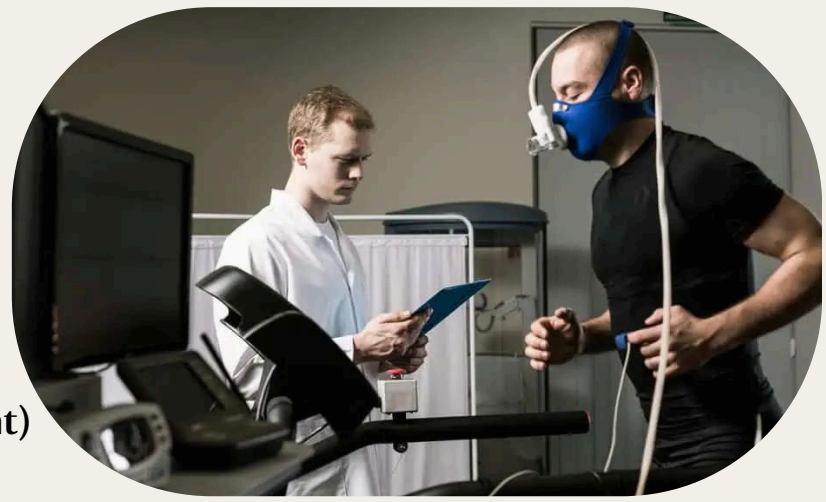


When climbing Kilimanjaro, its extreme altitude is the number one reason why people fail to reach the top. With that understanding, climbers look for ways to prepare better for the mountain's lofty elevation. One device that we see being used during exercise is the so-called "altitude training mask" or "elevation mask," which is intended to simulate a high-altitude environment. But do altitude masks really work?

First, let's discuss what these masks actually do.

An altitude training mask covers the nose and mouth of the athlete. Air flow is restricted with an adjustable valve system, blocking air from freely entering and exiting the device. As a result, it lowers the amount of air intake upon inhaling. This is known as "restricted air training" or "inspiratory muscle training." The mask also captures expended air when exhaling, thus increasing the concentration of carbon dioxide (and decreasing the concentration of oxygen) on the next inhalation.

So why does that point important?



Because at high altitude, the amount of oxygen decreases. Although the percentage of oxygen in the air is the same as it is at sea level (about 21%), there is less oxygen. This is caused by the lower air pressure. Oxygen molecules are further apart. So, each lungful of air you take has the same volume of air but contains less oxygen molecules.

The altitude training mask attempts to create a hypoxic (oxygen deficient) environment similar to that of being at higher elevations.

It is well known that being at elevation stimulates the body's natural red blood cell production. High altitude triggers the production of more red blood cells and hemoglobin through an increase in erythropoietin (EPO), one of the body's hormones. With more red blood cells and hemoglobin, the body can deliver more oxygen to muscles and boost athletic performance and endurance. It also reduces the incidence of altitude sickness, which is highly beneficial to climbers.

However, this process of acclimatization takes prolonged exposure to high altitude to occur. Training in a true hypoxic environment for an hour a day, several times a week is not even close to enough to begin the adaptation, let alone using a high altitude mask. Not surprisingly, there is zero evidence that regular use of an elevation mask can increase red blood cell counts. It is living at high altitude for weeks that causes these changes in the blood, not training at high altitude for hours.

There is a method of training for elite athletes known as "sleep high, train low." They train at low altitude because they can workout harder and longer in a normal oxygen environment and then sleep at high altitude to elevate their red blood cell count. Training is not done at high altitude because the low oxygen levels impede performance and ultimately harms training quality. The body cannot exercise as hard aerobically as it could at sea level. Breathing through a restrictive air mask is antithetical to improving fitness. Altitude masks make workouts more difficult and less effective, while doing nothing for acclimatization.



What training masks do is provide resistance to breathing. Using these devices can strengthen the intercostal muscles, which expand and shrink the chest cavity, and the diaphragm, a muscle that draws air into the lungs. This can improve the strength and endurance of your respiratory system.

That may sound very helpful, but it's not. The reason being that performance at high altitude is not limited by the amount of air, it's limited by the amount of oxygen in that air. A stronger respiratory system, being able to inhale and exhale more forcefully, does not change the fact that you are still breathing in less oxygen per breath. It does not address the root cause of altitude sickness – operating in an oxygen deficient environment.

So if an elevation mask does not work, what does? How can one actually prepare for high altitude?

One, you can live at high altitude for several weeks or more, which would boost your red blood cell count and oxygen-carrying capabilities levels to pre-acclimatize for Kilimanjaro's elevation. Or two, stay where you are and sleep in an altitude training system for 6-8 weeks. Companies like Hypoxico offer a tent that fits over any bed. A generator pumps low oxygen air into the enclosure to create a hypoxic environment.



Contact Hypoxico for more information on altitude training systems.

Pre-acclimatization through an altitude training system produces long-term adaptations, such as an increase in red blood cells, blood volume, and efficiency of oxygen absorption. Ultimately this will help reduce the incidence of Acute Mountain Sickness, increase performance on the mountain, and speed recovery on the mountain.



4.Are You Afraid of High Altitude? Here is How to Approach Mount Kilimanjaro's Biggest Obstacle.

When you climb Kilimanjaro, its high altitude is undoubtedly the number one obstacle in reaching the summit. It is the most common cause of having a rough time on the mountain overall as well as failing to get to the top, Uhuru Point. In low oxygen environments, humans experience altitude sickness, also known as acute mountain sickness (AMS).

Unless one has been to high altitude, it is uncertain how one's body will react at these elevations. And even if one has been OK at high altitude many times, it still is not entirely predictable that one will react the same way the next time.
There are lots of factors besides the current elevation that contributes to the onset of AMS, such as:



- What is the rate of ascent?
- What is the hiking pace?
- Are you overexerting yourself?
- Are you well hydrated?
- Are you at a caloric deficit?
- How is your physical fitness?
- How is your general health?
- Have you preacclimatized?
- Are you well rested?
- Are you taking anything that can interfere with acclimatization?
- Are you taking Diamox?



All these things are constantly at play while you are on your trek. The good news is that all the above factors can be controlled, either during preparation or during the climb. It is in your best interest to do everything you can to reduce your risk factors and mitigate altitude related symptoms on the trip.



Acclimatization is a game of catch up. As we climb, the body adapts to the thinner air. We climb again. The body adapts again.
In a perfect world, we would want everyone to feel good during the entire expedition. But experience tells us this is unrealistic. So our more practical goal is to have everyone feel well every morning, prior to setting out on the day's next leg. This would mean that when climbers wake up each day, their bodies have "caught up" to the altitude, and can function at the current oxygen level.

We emphasize to all of our clients that the best routes are the longer routes – particularly our 8-day Lemosho route and 9 day Northern Circuit route. By having more days on the mountain, we give the body the best chance to keep up with its oxygen demands.



Unfortunately, the most influential factor in how one acclimatizes is one that cannot be managed. That would be your genetics. There are some super humans who can climb the seven summits and never get as much as a headache. There are also those unlucky ones that become very ill at 10,000 feet. These are both rare cases that exist on opposite ends of the acclimatization spectrum.



So what is the norm?

At 10,000 feet and above, 75% of people will develop some symptoms of altitude sickness. On Mount Kilimanjaro, which peaks at 19,340 feet, expect that you will probably experience one or more of the following symptoms: headache, nausea, dizziness, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, fatigue. If you do, do not panic. It is totally normal.

Our guides have thousands of hours of experience handling altitude related issues across literally thousands of climbers. With this experience, they have learned how to prevent AMS in the first place and how to handle it when it arises. AMS is something to be respected and carefully managed. It is not something to be overly afraid of. With sufficient time, most people recover well, their symptoms subside, and they can safely continue the trek.



5.What is the Daily Schedule on Kilimanjaro?

Mornings



On a typical day on the mountain, you will be awakened from your tent around 6:30 AM by a staff member. Hot drinks will be available in the mess tent at this time while breakfast will be served around 7:00 AM. Before eating breakfast, you should pack your day pack and duffel bag and bring them outside of the tent so the porters can take down the tent.

Meals are served in a mess tent or occasionally outdoors if the weather is nice – complete with chairs, tables, dinnerware and silverware. You usually begin walking around 8:00 AM, while the porters stay behind to clean up the campsite and pack up the tents and other equipment. A health check will also be performed in the morning



Day Hiking

While the hours vary from day to day, your average walking time will be around four to six hours per day. Shorter duration routes or days with acclimatization hikes will generally be longer.

During the walk, your guide will decide the pace and when to take a break, usually once every hour.

Most days on the mountain are enjoyed at a leisurely pace.

Clients commonly express concern that they will be “too slow” and lag behind the guide and the rest of their group. This concern is unwarranted. Being slow is fine, and in fact, recommended. The guides set a pace that will give everyone the best chance to acclimatize to the increasing altitude. People who are turned around on the mountain typically do so because they have succumbed to altitude sickness, not because they were physically too tired to keep up or continue.

While you hike, the porters consistently move ahead of the group in order to prepare food, collect water, and set up tents so that everything is ready when the party arrives.

On some days, a hot lunch is served part way through your day’s trek. Other times, you eat lunch after arriving at the campsite



Evenings



Once you arrive at the campsite, snacks are served. Then, dinner is served around 6:00 PM. Another health check is performed in the evening. The guide will discuss the next day's events with the group after dinner. Down time is spent chatting with your fellow climbers, staff and others sharing the campsite, reading, or otherwise relaxing.

This is the routine for most days on the mountain, and you'll get the hang of it after a couple of days. We believe the schedule is pretty easy to follow and not very demanding. Of course, that's our goal, because we want you to feel strong and well rested. It shouldn't feel like work.

Summit Day Schedule



Summit day is a tough, 10-to-14-hour day.

This monumental effort is what makes climbing Kilimanjaro an achievement. It begins very early as guides try to time their trekking party to reach Uhuru Point at sunrise. Climbers go to sleep after an early dinner the night before and are awakened around midnight to prepare for the summit attempt. After a light snack or quick "breakfast", climbers ascend in the darkness, cold and wind. It goes without saying that under these conditions, climbing is difficult, especially on loose rock and up a very steep slope. This is where your physical prowess and mental toughness will be tested.

Our team of African Scenery® guides will be with you every step of the way to assist you during your ascent. Short breaks, usually lasting less than ten minutes, will be taken along the way for a quick snack and drink. This is to make sure the climbers stay energized and hydrated but do not get cold by sitting still. The guides will regularly check to see how everyone is feeling and offer a hand to those who may need extra help

Discontinuing the Climb

It is possible that someone may have to turn around on the mountain due to altitude sickness, exhaustion or a variety of other matters. Each group will have a lead guide, a number of assistant guides depending on the party size, and summit porters – all of whom are able to escort climbers down. Therefore, if a person cannot continue the ascent, one of the staff members will accompany this climber while the lead guide takes the group onward. The remaining party is unaffected and continues their climb as scheduled.

After the Summit



Once you reach the summit, some time is spent celebrating and taking photos, before returning to high camp, either Barafu or Kibo Hut. There, you eat lunch and regain your strength before continuing the descent to a much lower camp.

The long descent immediately after summiting is where most people get tired, due to the partial night's sleep, the expenditure of energy required to reach the top, and the particularly long distance covered that day. This is completely normal. For those who may be feeling ill from the altitude, getting to this lower elevation can relieve symptoms often quickly and completely.

Altitude Acclimatization



There is a strong correlation between the amount of time spent on the mountain and the summit success rate. Because the human body adapts to high altitude slowly, the more time it has, the better the chances of acclimatization.

A successful summit is usually a question of how well a climber can acclimatize to the high altitude, rather than the climber's ability to ascend.

By trekking standards, most of the day hikes on Kilimanjaro are not very strenuous. The big exception to this is the summit attempt, which requires a tremendous effort and is hard for nearly everyone. Climbers who acclimatize well to the altitude have a great chance of making it to the top.

How one reacts to high altitude is uncertain. Some people's bodies adjust well to the decreased oxygen levels; others do not. Being physically fit and in good health, although helpful, is no guarantee of your ability to acclimatize. Therefore the best advice we can give is to take 7 or more days on the mountain and to follow our acclimatization guidelines.



6.How to Stay Warm on the Summit of Kilimanjaro

Ask any climber what he or she is most concerned with when climbing Kilimanjaro and the majority of the time the answer is the summit attempt. While every other night on the mountain is spent sleeping in tents, this night is spent making the final ascent to Uhuru Point. The trek to the top is a grueling 4,000 feet climb which normally takes 6 to 8 hours. This is a significant amount of time to endure potentially subzero temperatures and strong winds while hiking slowly.



What should I wear on the way to the summit?



On the summit attempt, most likely you will be wearing more layers than you did on any other part of the hike. On the night of the summit, your guides will discuss what you should wear and what to pack based on the expected weather conditions you will experience. Don't be afraid to ask any questions at this briefing if there is anything that is unclear. Most commonly, people are comfortable wearing four to six layers on top and three layers on bottom. On the top, the four layers typically consist of: base layer, soft jacket, waterproof jacket, and down jacket. For those who get cold easily or for especially frigid temperatures, an additional base layer and soft jacket would make six layers. ***Note*** that the down jacket will probably come on and off during the night, off as you warm up while climbing and on while you sit down and rest on breaks. So the down jacket will comprise your outermost layer.

On the bottom, the three layers typically consist of: long underwear, hiking pants, and waterproof pants. In some rare cases, you might need a fourth layer, fleece pants. Gaiters are optional as always but they do close the gap between your pants and shoes and therefore reduce the wind. Wear gloves on your hands and a warm hat on your head. If it is extra cold and windy, use a balaclava or neck gaiter over your face.

What do I need to carry during the summit attempt?

Right are the clothing, accessories, equipment and other things you should either be wearing or have with you during the summit bid.



On the head:

- Knit hat, for warmth
- Neck Gaiter, for sun, wind and warmth
- Head lamp

TIP: Hooded jackets are preferred because they Block the wind from the sides and back. Have the hood on along with your knit hat and balaclava or buff.

On the hands:

- Gloves, light, or
- Gloves, warm (waterproof recommended)



On the upper body:

- 1 or 2 Long Sleeve Shirts, moisture-wicking (hood recommended)
- 1 or 2 Soft Jackets, fleece or soft-shell
- Waterproof Jacket, breathable with hood
- Insulated Jacket, synthetic or down



TIP: If it is a particularly cold night, double up on the base layer and/or soft shell.

TIP: The insulated jacket probably will not be needed while you are hiking. However, you will likely want it to put on during rest breaks to prevent from getting cold when you are not moving (note: put the insulated OVER your waterproof jacket so you do not have to keep removing and putting on your waterproof jacket).



On the lower body:

- Underwear, moisture-wicking
- Long Underwear, moisture-wicking
- Hiking Pants
- Waterproof Pants, breathable (side zipper recommended)
- Fleece Pants, warm

TIP: You will likely not need to wear the long underwear, hiking pants, waterproof pants, and fleece pants all at the same time. We suggest wearing the long underwear, hiking pants, and waterproof pants, while carrying the fleece pants in your day pack just in case.

On the feet:

- 1 or 2 Socks, wool or synthetic
- Hiking Boots or Shoes, warm, waterproof
- Gaiters, waterproof (optional)

TIP: Do not lace your boots or shoes up too tight as that may actually make your feet colder by cutting off circulation.

TIP: If you choose not to wear gaiters, you will probably need to empty gravel from your boots several times during the descent.

Inside the back pack:

- Brimmed hat, for sun protection
- Sunglasses
- Water Bottle (Nalgene, 32 oz.)
- Water Bladder (Camelback type, 3 liters
- Sunscreen
- Snacks, lightweight, high calorie, high energy (optional)
- Extra batteries for head lamp
- Electrolytes, powder or tablets (optional)
- Daypack

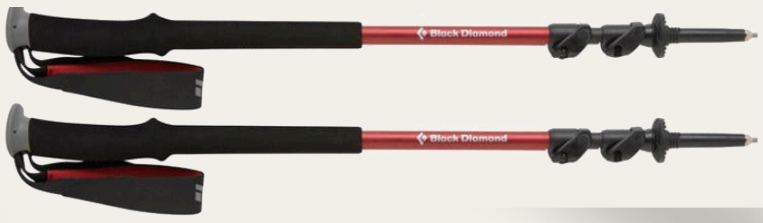


TIP: Water freezes from the top down. Carry the water bottle upside down in your pack, with the cap down, to keep the lid from freezing shut. Also, most people forget to drink on the way up. Try to drink some water at every rest break and at the peak.

TIP: Your water bladder will probably freeze during the ascent. An insulated hose does not help because the valve freezes first. Drink from your water bottle on the way up and water bladder on the way down.

TIP: Remember to apply sunscreen on the descent. The best place to apply it is at the summit. And switch from the warm hat to the brimmed hat.

TIP: Cold saps the charge from batteries. So keep your extra batteries and cell phone in your inside pocket of your jacket.



Miscellaneous:

- Trekking poles (highly recommended)

TIP: Trekking poles are optional for the trip but highly recommended especially for the Final ascent and downhill. The long descent After the hard summit requires a lot of energy. Poles reduce the amount of energy you need to expend and reduce the impact on your joints.

TIP: If your hands are very cold, use one trekking pole and keep your other gloved hand in your pocket. Alternate hands every once in a while, so each hand has time to warm up. Make a fist inside your glove.

What do I wear after the summit, on the descent?

Once the sun rises, so do the temperatures. You will need to strip layers off as you descend in order to stay comfortable. That means your insulated layer, hard shell and knit hat will come off at some point. It's a long way down, around a 13,000 foot elevation loss, so don't hike in clothing that is too hot or uncomfortable thinking that you're almost done.

Remember to keep drinking water and eating snacks. Apply sunscreen. Take breaks. Use trekking poles. The trek down to the last campsite after the long summit climb can be very exhausting. It is the usually the most physically taxing section of the route. This is a general guide based on African Scenery experience with thousands of clients. However, you should listen to what your body is telling you versus what we suggest. Always adapt to the environment based on how you feel throughout the hike. What works for one person may not work for you. But as long as you have everything from our gear list, you should be able to ward off the cold throughout your climb and during the summit.

7.What Happens to the Group if Someone Can't Continue?



African Scenery group climbs are usually filled to capacity, 16 participants in total.

On any given climb, most if not all of the 16 team members will make it to the top without issue. However, it is pretty common that one or two people may not be able to reach the summit for one reason or another. This can be due to altitude sickness, exhaustion, foot problems, cold, or a variety of other matters.

The same summit success rate holds true for private parties. However, since private parties are usually smaller, typically comprised of two to six participants, it's far less likely that more than one person on the team would not make it to Uhuru Point.

We often get asked what happens to the rest of the trekking party when someone in the group needs to turn around. Specifically, people ask whether the entire group must stop their climb if another member of the party can't continue.

The answer is absolutely not!

The group continues on the route itinerary even if others need to turn around.

High Guide to Client Ratio



Each climb we lead is fully supported. That means we have a large crew that takes care of the clients at all times on the mountain. Each group will have a lead guide, a number of assistant guides, cooks, and porters, depending on the party size.

This level of support means our clients receive plenty of attention which in turn leads to a safer and more successful experience. But it also means that we have the manpower required to manage the climbers separately if the situation calls for it.

For instance, faster and slower trekkers can walk at different paces if our guides deem it reasonable. This comes into play on summit night more so than on the standard day hikes. On day hikes, our guides keep a slow pace on purpose for better acclimatization, so resist the urge to rush ahead.

But what if a climber needs to descend? If someone needs to come down, one of team's guides will descend with the client, accompanied by porters too if necessary. The lead guide takes the group to the next destination. The remaining party is unaffected and continues their climb as scheduled.

8.Should We Sleep at Crater Camp?

Crater Camp is a campsite that is located near the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.

Located at around 18,800 feet above sea level, it is very close to the summit Uhuru Peak which lies at 19,340 feet above sea level. The campsite sits in between Uhuru and the Furtwangler Glacier. Climbers who stay here have the opportunity to sleep next to the disappearing glacier.



We lead climbers on Crater Camp variations of the Lemosho Route and Northern Circuit routes. However, we only do so sparingly. Sleeping at such a high altitude is a step up in risk compared to summiting and descending.

Crater Camp has an elevation of around 18,800 feet, while the previous night's altitude is around 15,000 feet in elevation. A gain of almost 4,000 feet is a big jump – too much of an adjustment for most people. The result is that there is a good likelihood to be stricken by altitude sickness, especially during the evening. And once that occurs, a evacuation from near the top of Kilimanjaro at night, though possible, is a burdensome task.



It is far easier on the body to climb from 15,000 feet to the summit (19,340 feet), then descend down to Mweka (10,065 feet). Clients who are affected by altitude sickness on the way up will usually recover very quickly as they descend. That is a stark contrast to what would happen if they were required to sleep at almost 19,000 feet.

Some operators take their clients to Crater Camp on short 6–7-day routes, with sometimes disastrous consequences. African Scenery® offers Crater Camp variations only on our longest routes. Additionally, we stay at Crater Camp after we summit. These two variables improve acclimatization and therefore reduce the chance of AMS for our clients.

Because of the increased risk for both clients and staff to stay at Crater Camp, trips using Crater Camp are offered only by special request and are subject to approval by Ultimate Kilimanjaro. We don't want to discourage you. Crater Camp is a magical place.