

Machame Route (6 days)

Day 1: Machame Gate (1,800m/5,905ft) to Machame Camp (3,000m/9,840ft)

Elevation Gain: 1,200 meters, 3,935 feet

Hiking time: 6 to 7 hours

At 8am, leave Arusha for Machame Gate, where you will meet our porters, guides and cooks that will spend the next six days trekking with you to Uhuru Peak, the roof of Africa. The drive through coffee farms and villages to Machame Gate takes about 2 hours. After arriving, wait at the gate while we register your climb and the porters and guides make final preparations. A lot of paper work before we start the hike.

Hike to Machame Camp via the mystical, moss-covered trees of Kilimanjaro's cloud forest. As the forest thins later in the hike, take in the heathers, tall grasses and wildflowers. If the weather is clear, enjoy the striking views of your ultimate destination, Kibo Peak. Our porters and cooks will go ahead and prepare the campsite before you arrive.

Day 2: Machame Camp (3,000m/9,840ft) to Shira Camp (3,840m/12,600ft)

Elevation Gain: 840 meters, 2,760 feet

Hiking time: 6 to 8 hours

Today's trek includes several uphill sections so carry plenty of drinking water as it can be hot hiking on a clear day. There are several viewpoints from which to view the plains and forests below, and the commanding Kibo and Mawenzi peaks above.

Notice the change in vegetation as you gain altitude. The trees diminish in size, giving way to Kilimanjaro's famous high altitude plants, *Scenecio kilimanjari* and *Lobelia deckenii*. After lunch, climb the Shira Plateau, created when Kibo's lava flows filled the Shira crater. Continue to Shira Camp and relax for the rest of the day. Kibo lies to the west and Mount Meru to the east.

Day 3: Shira Camp (3,840m/12,600ft) to Barranco Camp (3,950m/12,960ft)

Total Elevation Gain: 690 meters, 2,264 feet

Hiking time: 6 to 8 hours

Although this up and down day ends with an elevation gain of only 110 meters, by early afternoon you will have climbed 690 meters to a height of 4,530 meters before beginning your descent to Barranco Camp. This day is crucial for acclimatization. After breakfast, hike east on

the Shira Plateau before reaching the junction for the Shira and Lemosho Routes. Continue on through the barren landscape before stopping for lunch. Shortly after lunch, reach the highest point of the day before descending quickly to Barranco Camp. Faster hikers can take a detour via Lava Tower, a 300-foot lava formation jutting out of the mountainside.

Day 4: Barranco Camp (3,950m/12,960ft) to Barafu Camp (4,600m/15,200ft)

Elevation Gain: 650 meters, 2,140 feet

Distance: 13 Kilometers

Hiking time: 6 - 10 hours

Leave Barranco Camp after breakfast for Karanga Valley. The day begins with a 1.5 hour scramble up the Barranco Wall. This is the hardest part of the day and in some places you may have to use your hands to aid your climb. After reaching the top, hike through fairly level terrain before making a short but steep descent into the green Karanga River Valley.

Continue on to Barafu Camp, viewing several of Kibo's glaciers as well as the junction that connects the descent route, Mweka, with the Machame trail. During day four, hike by the Heim, Kersten and Decken Glaciers. Although the trail to Barafu passes through alpine desert with little vegetation, Barafu Camp offers stunning views of Kibo and Mawenzi peaks. Try to sleep upon finishing dinner as you will wake before midnight for your summit hike.

Day 5: Barafu Camp (4,600m/15,100ft) to Uhuru Peak (5,895m/19,340ft) to Mweka Camp (3,100m/10,170ft)

Elevation Gain: 1,295 meters, 4,240 feet

Elevation Loss: 2,795 meters, 9,170 feet

Hiking time: 6 hours to the rim, 1 hour to Uhuru, 3 to 4 hours back to Barafu, 4 hours to Mweka

Around midnight, begin the final ascent to Uhuru Peak. Hike by the light of your headlamp for the next six hours. The ascent to the crater rim is the most challenging part of the entire trek. The trail is very steep until you reach the crater rim at Stella Point.

The hike from Stella Point to Uhuru Peak is a gradual climb and, as far as hikes go, not very difficult. The altitude, however, makes the hike long and tiring. The crater rim hike takes approximately one hour. Upon reaching Uhuru, take photos of your guide and group at the peak before beginning the descent to Mweka Camp. On the way down from Uhuru, enjoy views of the mountain, crater, clouds and glaciers.

At Barafu Camp, eat breakfast and take a short break. You still have another three to five hours to go before reaching Mweka Camp.

Day 6: Mweka Camp (3,100m/10,170ft) to Mweka Gate (1,500m/4,920ft)

Elevation Loss: 1,600 meters, 5,250 feet

Hiking time: 4 hours

After breakfast, finish the trek with a hike through the forest to Mweka Gate. The trail may be slippery following rain. Our vehicles will meet you at the lower station of Mweka Gate to take you back to Arusha

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