

Umbwe Route: Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro

Difficulty: Very high

Scenery: excellent

Traffic : Low

The Umbwe route is one of the shortest routes to the Southern Glaciers and the Western Breach and it's the most challenging route on Mt Kilimanjaro. Approaching from the south, the Umbwe route is a short, steep and direct climb.

It is probably the most scenic, non-technical route on Kilimanjaro. It is quite taxing, primarily due to the relatively fast ascent to higher altitude, but the rewards are plentiful. Due to the fast ascension to high altitude, this route does not provide the necessary stages for acclimatization. Although the traffic on this route is very low, the chances of success are also low. Fewer people, pristine forest and shorter walking distances make it a great option for fit hikers

Umbwe Route (6 Days,5Nights)

Day 1: Umbwe Gate (1,800m/5,905ft) to Cave Bivouac Camp (2,850m/9,350ft)

Elevation Gain:1,050 meters, 3,445 feet

Hiking time: 4 to 6 hours

At 8am leave Arusha for Umbwe Gate where you will meet our porters, guides, and cooks who will spend the next six days trekking with you to Uhuru Peak, the roof of Africa. The drive through coffee farms and villages to Umbwe Gate takes about 2 hours. After arriving, wait at the gate while we register your climb and the porters and guides make final preparations. Your first day's destination is Cave Bivouac Camp, approximately 6 hours from the gate. The trail is steep and can be slippery in some places.

Hike through the moss-covered trees of Kilimanjaro's cloud forest. The forest will thin later in the hike and heathers, tall grasses and wildflowers will come into view. Porters and cooks will walk ahead to set up the camp in time for your arrival.

Day 2: Cave Bivouac (2,850m/9,350ft) to Barranco Camp (3,950m/12,960ft)

Total Elevation Gain: 1,100 meters, 3,610 feet

Hiking time: 5 to 7 hours

The first section of the trail continues following the ridge. After leaving the forest, continue through open moorlands until reaching Barranco Camp. Barranco is generally regarded as the

most scenic campsite on the Umbwe Trail as it's surrounded by giant senecios and lobelias. As Barranco is in a valley, the sun rises later than at the other camps.

Day 3: Barranco Camp (3,950m/12,960ft) to Karanga Valley (4,200m/13,780ft)

Elevation Gain: 250 meters, 820 feet

Distance: 7 Kilometers

Hiking time: 3 to 5 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.

Day 4: Karanga Valley (4,200m/13,780ft) to Barafu Camp (4,600m/15,100ft)

Elevation Gain: 400 meters, 1,320 feet

Distance: 6 Kilometers

Hiking time: 3 to 5 hours

After breakfast, begin the hike to Barafu Camp. On the way to Barafu, view 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 after 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. lunch will be served at Mweka where you will get the chance for shopping in one of the curio shop for souvenirs while waiting for the lunch preparation and for all who made to the top will get their certificates