



## **KILIMANJARO - NORTHERN CIRCUIT ROUTE**

If you're looking for the best possible chance of reaching the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro safely and successfully, the Northern Circuit Route is your ideal choice. This 9-day itinerary is the longest route on the mountain, offering more acclimatization time - which is critical for high-altitude success.

Starting from the Lemosho Gate on Kilimanjaro's western side, the route begins with a scenic trek through lush rainforest before crossing the expansive Shira Plateau. From there, the trail veers north and takes a clockwise path around the mountain, offering a truly remote and less-traveled wilderness experience that very few trekkers get to enjoy.

What sets the Northern Circuit apart is the unique combination of spectacular scenery, low foot traffic, and extended time at altitude. By gradually ascending and allowing your body more time to adapt to the thinning air, this route dramatically improves your chances of summiting.

The final summit push begins from the east, offering breathtaking pre-dawn views from Uhuru Peak, the highest point in Africa. After your summit success, you'll descend via the well-established Mweka Route and return to Arusha for a well-earned rest.

With Ian Taylor Trekking, you'll benefit from expert guides, professional support, and a track record of high summit success on Kilimanjaro. If your goal is safety, scenery, and summit success, then join us on the Northern Circuit Route up Kilimanjaro!

### **BRIEF ITINERARY**

- Day 1: Arrive at Kilimanjaro Airport (JRO) – Overnight at Hotel in Arusha
- Day 2: Drive to the Lemosho Gate and hike to Mti Mkubwa (Big Tree Camp)
- Day 3: Shira 1 Camp
- Day 4: Shira 2 Camp
- Day 5: Moir Hut
- Day 6: Buffalo Camp
- Day 7: Third Cave
- Day 8: School Hut
- Day 9: Uhuru Peak to Mweka Camp
- Day 10: Mweka Camp to Mweka Gate – Overnight at Hotel in Arusha
- Day 11: Hotel - Airport transfer



## **DETAILED ITINERARY**

### **Day 1: Arrive at Kilimanjaro International Airport**

You should aim to arrive as early as possible the day before the trek. Once you arrive, you will be picked up from the airport and taken on a 50-minute transfer to the hotel in Arusha, where you will be booked on a shared bed and breakfast basis. You will have a group briefing in the evening with our head guide to prepare you for the journey ahead. Our head guide was named the Mountain Guide of the year in 2019 on Kilimanjaro and you can read more about him here: <https://iantaylortrekking.com/blog/kilimanjaro-mountain-guide-of-the-year-2019/>.

### **Day 2: Lemosho Gate to Mti Mkubwa (9,186ft / 2,800m)**

After breakfast at the hotel, our local team will be there to pick the team up to start the journey! Normally, the meeting time will be 8am, but this will be confirmed at the briefing the night prior. A three-four-hour drive from Arusha takes us to the Lemosho Gate (7,550ft / 2,300m), located on the western side of Kilimanjaro. We should arrive by midday to register at the gate and enter Kilimanjaro Park, and this process can take up to a couple of hours. While we wait, we will have our lunch at the gate and sign into the National Park. Here you will begin to realize that we are on one of the least trodden routes compared to the "standard" lines of ascent such as Machame and Marangu. The flora and fauna are richer here and in places the vegetation is so untouched that it grows right across the narrow track. Our trek today will be along a little used track known as Chamber's Route. In approximately three hours, we will reach our camp in the forest at Mti Mkubwa, otherwise known as Big Tree Camp, at 9,186ft / 2,800m.

### **Day 3: Mti Mkubwa to Shira One Camp (11,480ft / 3,500m)**

After breakfast, we start the climb through the rainforest towards the giant moorland zone. Today is a full day's trek with a significant gain in height. So, it will be tough, even at a relatively low altitude. We will take a lunch stop at the crest of a ridge, just below the Shira Crater at approximately 9,850ft / 3,000m. After lunch, we follow the ridgeline steadily upwards towards the Shira Caldera, a high-altitude desert plateau, which is rarely visited. Shira is the third of Kilimanjaro's volcanic cones and is filled with lava flow from Kibo Peak. The Crater rim has been massively eroded over time by weather and volcanic action. Today we'll get our first close views of Kibo - the central volcanic cone and literally "the Roof of Africa". The second of the 3 volcanic spouts that make up Kilimanjaro is Mawenzi, but this lies hidden for the time being to the east of Kibo. Today's walk will be approximately 6 hours before reaching the camp at 11,480ft / 3,500m.



#### **Day 4: Shira One Camp to Shira Two Camp (12,795 ft / 3,900m)**

After breakfast, we continue to hike east across the Shira Plateau past the Shira Cathedral (12,470ft / 3,880 m), towards Shira Two Camp. The views of the plateau, across the mountain and to the plains below are nothing less than spectacular. After lunch we will hike up to 13,123ft / 4,000m. for some additional acclimatization. Today we will hike approximately 4 hours to Shira Camp 2, which covers 6.2miles/ 10 km. Then, after lunch we will hike for another hour approximately to cover 500m/ 1,640 feet.

#### **Day 5: Shira Two to Moir Hut (13,652 feet/ 4,161 m)**

After a nice breakfast, we will continue to the east up a ridge and then head southeast to Lava Tower for lunch. This is mostly a gradual ascent and will have us going past the turn to the Moir Hut, however it is an excellent acclimatization opportunity. The lava tower is a 300 feet tall volcanic rock formation at the elevation of 15,200 feet. After lunch at the Lava Tower, then we will retrace our steps a bit to reach the turn for the Moir Hut. Moir hut is a little used campsite at the base of Lent Hills. A variety of hikes are available on Lent Hills making this an excellent acclimatization opportunity. We will set up camp, and you will enjoy a nice dinner and overnight at Moir Hut. It is approximately 6km/ 3.75 miles, to get from Shira Camp Two to the Lava Tower, which should take around 4 hours. Then, from the Lava Tower to the Moir Hut is 4km/ 2.5 miles, which should take approximately 2 hours to reach camp for the night.

#### **Day 6: Moir Hut to Buffalo Camp (13,200 feet/ 4,023m)**

After breakfast, we will trek out of the Moir Valley with a moderately steep climb, then hike to the summit of Lent Hills before returning to the main trail. The path crosses a rock field and gently undulates before reaching Buffalo Camp. This section of the trail offers great views across the plains that lie north of Kilimanjaro and stretch out to the Kenyan/Tanzanian border. Dinner and overnight at Buffalo Camp. Today we will cover 12km/ 7.5 miles, and it should take approximately 6 hours.

#### **Day 7: Buffalo Camp to Third Cave Camp (16,010 feet / 4,880m)**

As we head up Buffalo Ridge, the terrain becomes increasingly sparse. This route is rarely traveled, and we will enjoy its mountain wilderness feel. We trek through remote valleys on to the northern slopes of Kilimanjaro until we arrive at Third Cave. Dinner and Overnight at Third Cave. The hike will cover 8km/ 5 miles, and it should take approximately 6 hours to reach camp.



### **Day 8: Third Cave Camp to School Hut (15,748 feet/ 4,800m)**

We climb steadily up and over the “Saddle,” which sits between Kibo and Mawenzi. We will continue to go to our camp, School Hut. Once here we rest, enjoy an early dinner, and prepare for the summit day. Today, we will only cover approximately 5km/ 3 miles, and it should take approximately 4 hours to reach the School Hut.

### **Day 9: School Hut to Uhuru Peak (19,340 feet / 5,896m) to Mweka Camp (10,200 feet / 3,100m)**

When we wake up at approximately 12am (midnight) in School Hut Campground, we will get ourselves dressed in all our warmest summit gear as we begin walking well before dawn, and the coldest part of the day comes just before sunrise. This summit day proves to be the steepest and most demanding part of the mountain, and we will be taking it very slowly as we move up the trail. The moon may provide some light, but we'll be using head-torches for several hours until the sun rises. At Gilman's point, at 18,600 feet, you will be rewarded with the most magnificent sunrise you are ever likely to see, coming over Mawenzi Peak. Finally, after approximately 6 hours of hiking, we arrive at Uhuru Peak- the highest point on Mount Kilimanjaro and the continent of Africa! The Crater wall stands steeply over the Crater floor about 200 feet below us to our right. As the sun rises, light hits the Crater floor, illuminating the Furtwangler Glacier and the warmth of the sun will be a welcomed feeling! This will be by far the toughest day you will have on the trek and the views from the summit will make you realize why you decided to put yourself through the pain! After about thirty minutes or so on the summit, we will begin the long slog back down the trail on a different route that we came up. It will take us approximately 3 hours walking before we arrive back at Barafu Camp, and you will be welcomed with tea and brunch and a quick rest before we continue our way down the mountain. We will have another 4 hours of walking from Barafu Camp to reach our destination of the night, Mweka Camp at 10,200 ft / 3,100m. Having started this extraordinary day out as early as midnight and not finishing the day until the sun is setting, you can imagine how exhausted your body will be as you rest in celebration of your success on the highest point in Africa! Today, you will be hiking for approximately 13+ hours!

### **Day 10: Mweka Camp to Mweka Gate**

We will wake early in the morning today to begin our final walk off Kilimanjaro. After breakfast the entire team will come together for a farewell ceremony where we will say 'kwaheri' or goodbye to the porter. Here is where the team can offer any tips to the staff before heading down the trail. The walk today will take us approximately 4 hours to get from the camp to the Mweka Gate. Then take a short 5-minute ride in the vehicle to our final lunch spot, where you will also have a chance to do a little souvenir shopping before getting back in the vehicle for the three-



hour journey back to Arusha. Here you will get to enjoy a well-deserved shower and bed to sleep in! Today we will cover 5.8 miles/9.3 km to finish the hike, and it should take approximately 4 hours to reach the gate!

### **Day 11: Arusha**

Today, the final day of the itinerary, will be spent at leisure in Arusha. You can decide to sit by the pool at the hotel or explore the town of Arusha. We will transfer you back to the airport to catch your international flight home. There is also an option for you to stay on in Tanzania and do one of our Safari options, sampling some of the world's most unique wildlife. Get in touch for more information.

### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Every effort will be made to keep to the above itinerary, but as this is Adventure Travel in a remote mountain region, we cannot guarantee it. Weather conditions, road conditions, vehicle breakdowns and the health of participants can all contribute to changes. The Trek Leader will try to ensure that the trip runs according to plan, but an easy-going nature will be an asset!

### **What the price includes:**

- 1). National Park fees and Peak Permits
- 2). 2 night's hotel B&B on a shared basis
- 3). Airport transfers
- 4). All road transport by private vehicles
- 5). All camping facilities and meals during the trek (quality menu & tents)
- 6). All portage costs (15kg / 33lbs per person)
- 7). All costs for Tanzanian guides, cook staff, camp crew and porters (not including tips)
- 8). 5 days a week professional office support before your trek
- 9). Flying doctor's insurance cover
- 10). Toilet tents & 3, 3 course meals per day

### **What the price does not include:**

- 1). Visa fees (\$50 - \$100)
- 2). International Flights to Arusha (JRO)
- 3). Bar bills and laundry
- 4). Lunch and dinner in Arusha
- 5). Travel insurance (Compulsory)
- 6). Optional trips (e.g. a Safari Extension) and sightseeing tours
- 7). Tips (US \$350 per person)



#### 8). Personal gear and equipment for the climb