

Rongai Route 7 DAYS hiking



The **Rongai route** is the only route that approaches Kilimanjaro **from the north**, very close to the Kenyan boarder. It offers **spectacular views** of the Masai lands reaching beyond Tanzania into Kenya. It is **drier than other routes** making it a good option for those climbing **during the wet season**. It is also a good route for those looking for a **shorter, more remote route with fewer trekkers**. The Rongai route **joins the Marangu route** for the **summit ascent and descent** via Marangu, southeast of the mountain. While being a potentially shorter and “easier” route the Rongai like the Marangu is a **continuous gradual ascent**, which can make **acclimatisation more challenging than on routes** where the trail ascends and descends between camps. The “hike up high, and sleep lower” on other routes helps improve acclimatisation to altitude. To improve acclimatization, summit success, and safety, on the **Rongai route 7- 8 days are recommended**. While we offer a 6 day hike we **recommend** that you **consider our 7-day hike**.

Our guides will monitor you daily for signs of altitude related sickness, **using a pulse oximeter** to assess your level of blood oxygen saturation, and using a **stethoscope** to listen for any unusually lung sounds. **Of the many hikers** that journey up Kilimanjaro each year **a few experience potentially serious altitude issues**. **Our guides are trained to identify** these, and **will transport you down** if necessary. Our team take your **well-being seriously**, and carry an **emergency Oxygen** canister, and **2 – way communication systems**. Many hikers assist their acclimatization **by taking Diamox**, obtained from their **travel clinic** before travelling to Tanzania.

Rongai Route

Nightly accommodation: Hotel: 2; Tents: 6

Minimum days on trek: 7

Recommended days on trek: 6 - 7 days

Difficulty: Beginners

Scenery: Very Good

Traffic: Low - Medium

Stating point: North

Distance: 73km



Acclimatization: Low to medium

Recommendation by Kilimanjaro Bliss: 7 days

DAY 0: You will be **met at Kilimanjaro airport**, if flying direct, and transported to your hotel. We **recommended** that you try to **arrange your flight so you arrive 1.5 - 2 days before your hike**. This is to allow your body time to rest and **begin to acclimatisation** to the new time zone and altitude. It also **allows for any flight delays and baggage issues** (always wear or carry your hiking boots in flight with you, and let us know as soon as possible if your luggage does not arrive with you). We recognise that some people have limited vacation time and may arrive as late as the afternoon prior to starting their hike.

Your **guide** will arrange to meet with you **during the afternoon / evening for a pre-trip briefing**. Please make sure you **bring your passport and insurance details**, as well as your **return flight details**.

DAY 1: Transportation to Rongai gate - Simba camp

Elevation: 2000m - 2650m

Distance: 7km

Time: 3- 4 hours walking

Habitat: Rain forest

We will **pick you up** from your hotel around **8:30am**, where you will **meet the team of guides, cook and porters**, who will load your luggage so that we can **leave around 9:00am**. We first drive for about **3 hours to Marangu gate** to obtain our permit. We then have a **further 2 hours drive to the Rongai gate**, which is located 15 minutes from the Kenyan border. Here hikers **register** at the office (you will need your **passport number** for this) and **eat lunch** while the porter's loads are weighed. Once this is complete we **begin our hike up through the tropical rain forest**. Here there is a **high chance that we will hear and see wildlife**, such as **monkeys and birds**, as the trail continues upward to our **first overnight at the Simba camp**.

Day 2: Simba camp – 2nd Cave camp

Elevation: 2650m - 3487m

Distance: 5.5 km

Time: 3 - 4 hours

Habitat: Moorland

This is a short day we begin **hiking through the moorland**, where the habitat supports **colourful wild flowers** along the side of the trail as well as **stunning views of the eastern icefields** on the rim of Kibo. We stop for **hot lunch at the second cave**, and **make our camp** close by.

Day 3: 2nd Cave camp - Kikelelwa

Elevation: 3450m - 3675 m

Distance: 6 km

Time: 3 - 4 hours

Habitat: Alpine desert

Following a hearty breakfast the hike continues anti- clockwise from 2nd cave to Kikelelwa camp **up steep grass sloped terrain**. The **views** from here include the **vast expanse of the Masai Mara**, in Kenya to the North. We reach camp for lunch, and spend the **afternoon acclimatizing to the altitude**.



Day 4: Kikelelwa - Mawenzi Tarn hut -

We hike up to **the middle of the Mawenzi peak** to assist acclimatization and **return to camp**. From the top of we will enjoy the **stunning views of Mawenzi, Kibo and the little Lake** at our camp.

Day 5: Mawenzi Tarn hut - Kibo hut campsite

Elevation: 4300 m- 4700 m

Distance: 8km

Time: 4- 5 hours

Habitat: "Lunar" landscape

The hike to Kibo campsite **crosses the lunar-like landscape** of the Mawenzi / Kibo saddle and takes between 4 – 5 hours. A **hot lunch** will be waiting for us at Kibo, where **we will relax before eating an early dinner**, so we can retire to our tents **early to sleep**, in **preparation for the summit hike which starts around midnight**.

Day 6: Kibo Hut – Uhuru Summit – decent to Horombo hut

Elevation: 4700m - 5895m and down to 3700m

Distance: 21km

Time: 12 hours

Habitat: Arctic

Our **final ascent to Uhuru Peak the "roof of Africa" begins at midnight**. There are **three sections to this day's hike**. The first from **base camp to Gillman's point** at 5681m is the **most challenging** section due to its steepness and increasing altitude. It is a **slow shuffle up** the volcanic scree switchbacks, **requiring both physical and mental determination**. As we reach Gillman's Point we enjoy the **magnificent sunrise lighting up the mountain** and valley below. **From Gillman's to Stella point** and on to Uhuru Peak at 5895m takes just over an hour and is a **gentle hike along the crater rim**, with **magnificent views of Kilimanjaro's famous glacier and ice cliffs**. We spend a maximum of **15 minutes at Uhuru Summit due to the high altitude**. This gives us time to **congratulate each other, enjoy the euphoria** of our **achievement, photograph and breath-in the magnificence** of our surroundings. We **begin our descent**, first back to **Kibo for brunch**, then continuing **down to Horombo camp (3700m)** for dinner and **overnight camp**.

Day 7: Horombo hut - Marangu gate

Elevation: 3700m 1800m

Distance:19 km

Time: 6 hours

Habitat: Rain forest

After breakfast the **whole team (clients, guides, cooks and porters) celebrate and share their thanks** with each other before making the **final descent to Marangu gate**. You sign out of the Park, board **our vehicle**, which will be **waiting at Marangu gate** and are transported first to **Moshi for lunch**, and later back to your **hotel in Arusha**.

Next Day: Arusha

Depending on what your chosen itinerary is:

If you are scheduled to **fly out of Kilimanjaro International airport** we will arrange your transport from **your hotel to the airport**.



If you are heading out on Safari: Your **safari guide will pick you up** from your hotel in the morning **between 8 – 9am.**

If you are taking a day or two to **rest up and see Arusha**, we can arrange a visit to the Paradiso orphanage we support, and /or to other **local attractions that interest you.** **Ask Us** for list of recommended attractions.

Note: Seven and eight-day hiking options usually spend an additional day at Mawenzi Tarn (4,300 meters) to acclimatise. Eight day trekkers also stop on day two at Rongai Second Cave (3,450 meters) before proceeding to Kikelewa Camp (3,600 meters).