

# MOUNT KILIMANJARO TREK

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How fit do I need to be?

Trekking Mount Kilimanjaro is all about **endurance** rather than speed; you will soon come to learn the term '**pole, pole**' ('slowly, slowly' in Swahili) when on the mountain. You will be waking up early in the mornings and trekking for long distances each day, so ensuring that you have a good level of fitness and stamina before you depart is key. Sticking to our training plan will really pay off. The best form of preparation is to walk for good lengths of time on undulating terrain, and where possible to follow this up with a similar length trek the next day. It is important that you train with the walking boots that you will be using on the trek itself and with your day pack on your back.

### What will the trekking be like?

You will trek through **different eco-systems** on your ascent up the mountain, on overgrown forest paths, moorland, rocky trail and scree. Much of the walking is rough underfoot. Lower down it can be wet and muddy; barren and arid higher up. It is challenging in itself, but the main challenge lies in the **altitude** – read on for more detail. You will trek approximately 90km (55 miles) on this trip overall, though it's much more useful when training to think about the hours you need to walk for, and the terrain, not the distance. There's a reason this challenge is graded as **extreme!**

Keep in mind that this is a **very tough trek** and everyone will find elements of the challenge difficult at some point, whether it is the physical trekking, camping, changing weather, effects of altitude or something else. It is great if you can work as a team and help each other out during any difficulties. While there are many challenges, **the enjoyment and rewards that come from trekking Mount Kilimanjaro are immense!**

### What is the accommodation like?

Your first and last night will be spent in lodge accommodation near to Moshi, where there is a swimming pool. Make sure you eat a good dinner on your first night there. The lodge also has a fantastic view of Mount Kilimanjaro which puts the challenge into perspective. Whilst on the trek you will be **camping in tents with room for 2 people plus your luggage**. If you are travelling alone, you will be paired up with someone of the same sex and similar age. You can still let us know if you wish to share with a particular person, if you have not already done so.

### Can I request single accommodation?

There may be a limited number of single rooms available in the lodge accommodation at the start and the end of your trip, subject to request and at an additional cost (on a first-come, first-served basis). It is not possible to have your own tent on the trek itself. Sharing a room is a really good ice-breaker if you don't know anyone else on the trip, so don't worry too much about it!

### Who accompanies us on the trek from Discover Adventure?

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first-aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

### Will there be a doctor trekking with us?

An expedition doctor or medic usually accompanies the group as well, dependent on **group size**. Our medics are there to provide first aid and promote day-to-day welfare on the trip; they carry a robust medical kit, but cannot possibly be equipped with everything needed to counter any given situation. They also provide crucial support to our leaders and, as they are usually found at the back of our groups, are also experts at encouraging you when things get tough.



## Who else will accompany the group on this challenge?

Our leadership team on the mountain is completed by local mountain guides, who have a wealth of experience. We also have a local support crew of porters, cooks and drivers. The local team knows the area well, and is a great source of knowledge about the local way of life as well as trekking Kilimanjaro. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

## What are the transport arrangements for the group and our kit?

Vehicles take the group to the start of the trek and pick us up at the end. Porters carry all luggage, food, water and camping equipment. There are strict rules restricting the weight of the load a Kilimanjaro porter is permitted to carry – see the question below about luggage allowance.

## What will the weather be like?

Prepare for **all weathers** as you will experience a range of temperatures whilst trekking. It's hot and humid when you first start and then very cold towards the top. Never underestimate the power of the sun's rays, even when it feels cold, there is cloud cover, or the wind is blowing. Please bring SPF30 sun-cream as a minimum, preferably higher, along with lip salve with a high SPF too. The higher you trek, the more intense the sun's rays get and risk of burning is increased. A hat and quality sunglasses are a must.

## What will I be eating?

The food is fresh and plentiful so **make sure you eat well** (it's typical to lose your appetite at altitude, so you may have to make yourself eat at times). The meals are usually high in carbohydrate content, and you will eat foods like porridge, bread, stews, soups, potatoes, meat dishes, pastas, fruit & veg.

## I have a specific dietary need; will there be enough for me to eat?

Being vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free or having other dietary requirements is usually not a problem provided you **let us know well in advance** (airlines need to know at least 8 weeks prior to the departure). If you feel you aren't getting enough energy because of your dietary requirements please talk to the leaders on the trip – they can't help unless they know there's a problem. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

## Do I need to bring snacks?

Bring enough snacks to keep you going each day - around **3 - 4 tasty treats a day plus 6-8 for summit night will suffice**. We recommend a combination of slow and fast release snacks such as cereal bars (e.g. Tracker), flapjacks, salted nuts, chocolate bars such as Mars or Snickers, and a packet of sweets. Bringing a combination of treats will keep you interested in snacking as consistent energy levels are very important. This trip is all about the calories as you may be expending around double your usual calorie intake!

## How much do I need to drink?

You will find that you need to drink significantly more whilst trekking at altitude and need to do so in order to keep the effects of altitude at bay. You should be drinking small amounts at regular intervals to keep well hydrated. You will be provided with plenty of sterilised water at breakfast, lunch and in the evening so keep topping up your personal water bottles/hydration systems. **Ensure that you bring sufficient water-carrying capacity**. You will need to bring at least 3ltrs water capacity in total, with a 1ltr (35oz) water bottle and 2ltr (70oz) bladder or another 2 x 1ltr bottles. You will need to have one bottle down your jacket on summit night as bladder hoses and mouth pieces tend to freeze at higher altitudes even with insulation on them.

## What is the celebration meal?

At the end of your challenge, there will be a final meal together as a group to celebrate your achievements. Please check your trip itinerary to confirm whether you will need to set aside funds to pay for this on the night.



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## What about toilets?

Toilet facilities won't be like home. There are no toilet facilities except for in camp or at lunch so there may be occasions when you need to go whilst trekking. You will need to take wet wipes, nappy sacks and paper in order to make sure you **leave no trace** whilst on your trek. These can then be discarded at the next stop. There will be portaloos at lunch and in camp. You may see toilet paper discarded by other trekkers, but please do not be tempted to do likewise. We feel strongly about minimising our environmental impact.

## What can I do to prevent illness in camp?

Illness can spread through the group very quickly when you are living closely together so it's important to bring **antiseptic hand sanitiser** for use after the toilet and before eating to minimise the spread of germs. Also, avoid sharing water bottles and sharing each other's food or sweets as this spreads germs very easily, even if you are being careful.

## What if I have any issues during the trip?

Our leaders are very experienced and work very hard to ensure your trip runs as smoothly and enjoyably as possible, and we're sure that you'll have a wonderful time. If you do have any concerns or problems during the trip **please talk to the crew and give them the opportunity to explain or rectify things while they are able**. They are all very approachable!

## How will the altitude affect me?

Trekking at altitude makes even the simplest tasks feel like hard work, and along with feeling cold and fatigued, there will be tough times for everyone. The Machame Route allows for excellent acclimatisation to the altitude as it contours around the mountain, rather than going straight up, and allows you to trek higher than you sleep at important points on the ascent.

Symptoms of being at altitude include **tiredness, shortness of breath, headaches and nausea**. Altitude affects people differently and being super-fit is no guarantee of being less likely to feel the effects. Where a participant is suffering from the effects of altitude, it may be necessary to walk them back down the mountain. There is no way of predicting how you will feel at altitude, even if you have been at altitude before.

Our recommendations are to have **trained properly, to not drink alcohol** in the days leading up to the trip and to **listen to your leaders/guides** if they try to slow down the trekking pace. The slower you trek the more it helps fending off feeling poorly. A Tanzanian guide will walk at the front of the group to set the pace. It is not a race - go at your own pace, enjoy the scenery and the amazing experience! There is a lot of information about Altitude Mountain Sickness (AMS) in our document 'The Effects of Altitude,' including information about the medication Diamox, so please have a good read.

## What are the contingencies in case of an emergency on this challenge?

The crew will have radios and emergency satellite phones, extensive medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. If you are feeling unwell on this trek, tell your leaders and listen to their advice, as your health and safety is our top priority. In some cases, you may need to come down from the mountain and the crew will support this quickly and efficiently in the best way possible. If you struggle to acclimatise to the altitude and need to descend to lower elevations for your own safety, you **must ensure you have enough funds to cover any resultant costs – for example, extra hotel accommodation or meals**. Some of these may be recoverable through your travel insurance, depending on your cover. The same applies if you have to depart from group arrangements for any other reason, such as fitness, illness or any unforeseen circumstances.



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## How much money will I need to bring with me?

We recommend that you take **approximately £200 for personal expenses in US\$**, as you cannot get the local currency outside Tanzania. Out of this amount, you will need to set aside approximately \$15-25 for the meals typically not included (check your itinerary for details) and money for tips for the local crew. You will also need to set aside money for your visa if you are obtaining this on arrival. You can only obtain Tanzanian Shillings (TSH) in Tanzania, but US Dollars are widely accepted. It is advisable to take small denominations of US Dollars and you may find that change will be given in TSH. We have been advised that US dollars issued before 2006 are not accepted. There will be opportunities to buy souvenirs on the trip. It is advisable to bring a credit card in case of an emergency, however cards are not always widely accepted so please don't be offended if they are refused, it is best to use cash.

## What do you recommend for crew tips?

The local crew and porters work incredibly hard for the duration of the trip and it is great if we can show our appreciation in the form of a tip. The guide is **around \$120-\$150 per participant** which is split out between the local crew but this is of course at your discretion (remember this trek is a considerable operation, involving a large support team). Please do not give out individual tips to any local crew who you feel have helped you personally. They work well as a team and those 'out of sight' will be working just as hard. Feel free to give away any unwanted kit as the porters are always grateful for extra items – they can be pooled together when you get back to the hotel.

## Will there be Wi-Fi, phone reception and charging points?

The Wi-Fi in the hotel may not be as fast as you're used to at home and there won't be any internet access when on the trek itself. The phone reception will be limited and, unsurprisingly, there are no charging points on the trail. You may wish to bring your own solar charging device. Treat this challenge like a 'Digital Detox' and tell your relatives that no news is good news, as the leader will have a satellite phone for emergencies only.

## Do I need travel insurance?

As part of your booking conditions, it is compulsory that you ensure you have adequate travel insurance cover to cover you for trekking at altitude. Participants residing in the UK can purchase insurance through our website with Insure2Travel via [this link](#); otherwise you are able to source your own preferred cover with a company of your choosing.

## What if this trip does not meet minimum numbers?

Every group needs a minimum number of bookings for it to be feasible to run. Cancelling a trip is rare, and we do our utmost to avoid it. You will be contacted in plenty of time if we are concerned about the group size, and we will discuss options with you.

## When will we know the flight details and meeting point?

Discover Adventure will usually confirm the main group flight details 5 months prior to the trip departure so you will know which airport you are travelling from and can arrange suitable transport. You will be sent your **Final Joining Instructions** in the month prior to the trip departure date, within which specific details of **where and when to meet your trip leader** and fellow trekking participants will be confirmed.

## Can I make my own flight arrangements or alter my flight from the main group?

Flights are included on this trip and you will automatically be booked on to the main group flights, unless you let us know otherwise in good time (no later than three months prior to the trip departure). It is possible to make your own flight arrangements and a land-only discount will be applied when you return the '**Flight Arrangements Form**' (sent at the time of booking). It is also possible to extend your stay and deviate from the main group flight booking (fee applies); you will also need to return the 'Flight Arrangements Form' with your request. Note that you will remain on the same flight path returning from the same airport. There is sometimes a supplement to pay if the flights are more expensive on your requested day; early requests have the best chance of avoiding this. We will always contact you if this is the case to check whether you are happy to proceed. If you are keen to upgrade your flight, this may be possible at a supplement and you can contact us for an approximate price but please note that this is often very expensive and we will require full payment upfront.



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## Will I need my flight ticket before the trip departure date?

Unless specified otherwise, you do not need to have your flight ticket prior to the trip departure date as this will be given to you by the trip leader or a Discover Adventure representative at the airport.

## What do I need to bring?

Refer to the **Kit List** sent to you to ensure that you have all the essentials for a comfortable trip. Make sure your walking boots are waterproof and well-worn in. Trekking tops of a wicking nature will be more comfortable to walk in than cotton. Don't forget your charity t-shirts too! If you intend to trek with poles, ensure that you train with them too. If you are still to buy some kit don't forget that Cotswold Outdoor, Snow and Rock, Cycle Surgery and Runners Need offer all Discover Adventure participants **15% off** any purchases you make with them. Please ask us for the code if you do not have this already.

## What is the luggage allowance?

Your main luggage limit on the plane is 20kg with a 5kg allowance for hand luggage. However you will need to travel as lightly as possible as there is a **weight limit on the trek** itself and **your main bag must not weigh more than 12kg (26lbs)**. Your main toiletries, travel clothing and anything else that you do not need to take on the mountain can be left in a separate bag at the hotel, so bring something smaller to hold your extras in. Stick to the kit list and you'll manage that with no problems. Don't forget that suitcases are not suitable, **soft rucksacks/kitbags only** (with no wheels on). Take only small bottles of toiletries, sun cream, and half a pack of wet wipes, for example. Doing a practice pack/weighing your bags before you leave home is very beneficial to make sure you will be able to stick to the limit.

## Do I need to carry my own luggage?

Your luggage is transported from camp to camp by the porters. You cannot access your main packs during the day so need to carry a day-pack with your fleece, waterproof, sun-cream, hat, camera, water etc. Discover Adventure Kitbags are specially designed for the rigours of our challenges and are very affordable, please ask for details.



## What are the passport and visa requirements?

A valid 10-year passport is essential; with at least six months remaining before expiry. You will need a tourist visa to enter Tanzania. You can very easily obtain your visa at Kilimanjaro Airport on arrival, which costs \$50USD for those with a British passport. For all other nationalities, check the visa fee and requirements with the Tanzanian High Commission as it does vary (for Irish and United States passport holders, the visa fee at the airport is currently \$100). If you would prefer to, you may arrange your visa prior to travel. For more details, please refer to the foreign travel advice [given here](#). If you would like to use a visa agency, we work with the Visa Machine (follow [this link](#) for more information).

## How can I find out more about the requirement for vaccinations?

You will need to ensure that you have the vaccinations required for this trip prior to travel. You can find some guidance and information on the [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk) website. Always consult your local GP or travel clinic for the latest health advice, as they are aware of any updates in World Health Travel requirements.

## Passenger Portal

We have a passenger portal which will enable you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).

## Download the app!



We use the VAM00S travel app that can be downloaded from the App store to your smartphone. The app can be used offline, and allows you to access all of your challenge documents from your phone. Just download the app and enter your unique code at the prompt (please ask for your specific code if you do not have it).



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