

Contiki Holidays: Rongai Kili Climb

Day 1 - Kilimanjaro International Airport to Moshi Town

Kilimanjaro awaits! You'll be collected from Kilimanjaro airport and transferred to Springlands Hotel located in Moshi Town, close to the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro. Here you will have a climb briefing, dinner, and time to prepare before bunking down for the night.

Day 2 - Moshi Town to Simba

Your day starts early with breakfast and a briefing. We'll drive through picturesque villages and coffee plantations for 4-5 hours until we reach the attractive wooden village of Nale Muru (1,950 m/6,398 ft). After signing in and preparing the porters, we begin the hike on a wide path winding through fields of maize and potatoes, then enter a pine forest. The climb ahead is gentle but consistent, through attractive forest that shelters a variety of wildlife.

As the forest begins to thin, we arrive at Simba Camp (2,600 m/8,530 ft) near the 'First Cave' at the edge of the moorland zone, with extensive views over the Kenyan plains.

Day 3 - Simba to Kikelewa Camp

Load up on breakfast, because today's hike will be approximately 6-7 hours walking. This is a steady hike with spectacular views of the eastern ice fields and Kibo.

We spend the night resting up at camp, at an altitude of 3600 m.

Day 4 - Kikelewa Camp to Mawenzi Tarn

After breakfast we'll take a short and steep morning climb of 3-4 hours.

We have the afternoon to acclimatise and time to explore local surroundings. Tonight is spent at camp at an altitude of 4290 m.

Day 5 - Mawenzi Tarn to Kibo Hut

Today we cross the incredible lunar desert, approx 5-6 hours walking, to reach Kibo hut.

We have the rest of the day to acclimatise and flop into bed for an early night. We'll camp at an altitude of 4750m.

Day 6 - Kibo Hut to Horombo Huts via Gillman's Point and Uhuru Peak

The peak is calling, and we're ready! The goal is to climb before dawn so that we can reach Uhuru Peak shortly after sunrise. Rise and shine at midnight (yep!) to a light breakfast and prepare for your summit ascent. We do the beginning of this climb in the dark with headlamps or flashlights, and you need some warm layers to ward off the chilly morning frost. The beginning of the climb is over loose volcanic scree, but by way of some well-graded zig-zags we'll reach Gilman's Point on the crater rim at 5,861 m/18,640 ft between 5 and 7 AM. Slowly slowly, or, 'pole pole', and an optimistic attitude will get you there!

Here, views of the fabled crater and its icecaps will greet you. You've made it past the first hurdle! Another 2 hours of hiking along the crater rim near the snows takes you to Kilimanjaro's true summit, Uhuru Peak, by 9 AM.

This is Africa's highest point, and you would have to travel more than 3,000 miles toward the Himalayas to find a higher peak. You've done it! Be sure to get some snaps here at the summit to post on your Insta. After catching our breath at the summit, we'll start the descent back.

We descend back to the Kibo Hut, have lunch, rest, collect our things, and recross the saddle to the Horombo Huts. Time to eat dinner and get some well-deserved sleep: this was, by far, the most difficult part of the trek.

Day 7 - Horombo Huts to Moshi Town via Mandara Huts

Wake up, pack, and descend through the moorland to the Mandara Huts.

We'll stop for lunch here then continue our triumphant recession down through lush forest to the park gate, which we should reach around 2 or 3 PM. Remember to say goodbye to your guides, cooks, and porters since you will be leaving them here.

A vehicle will take you back to the Springlands Hotel or similar hotel in Moshi, where it is definitely time for celebration!

Day 8 - Moshi Town

It may be the end of the trip, but your memories (and calf muscles) will be forever changed! Say goodbye to your trip-mates and give yourself a huge pat on the back. The morning transfer takes you to Kilimanjaro International Airport for a final goodbye.