



Mount Kilimanjaro Rongai Route

S2 Mountain Adventures

Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania - Rongai Route

January – February 2026

Description: Join S2MA for the trip of a lifetime to climb the “Roof of Africa” - Mt. Kilimanjaro! The Rongai Route is an attractive option for adventurers seeking a scenic yet relatively less traveled path. Ascending from the north-eastern slope of the mountain, the route takes us along the border between Tanzania and Kenya and avoids the heavy crowds on the southern trails. Mt. Kilimanjaro is commonly referred to as a “trekking peak”, which makes it perfect for beginners. The Rongai Route requires no previous high-altitude experience or technical skill. However, fitness is necessary! The route covers nearly 50 miles over 8 days and is a moderate, low-angle trail with no permanent snow fields. The most significant challenge is the altitude, with the summit rising to 19,341 ft (5,895 m).

For those wanting maximum adventure, after the climb you can opt for a 3-day safari in Tanzania's world-famous parks. Witness the soul-inspiring panoramas of Lake Manyara, Ngorongoro Crater and Tarangire. It's not unusual to see lions resting in the afternoon sun while herds of zebras and wildebeests graze nearby. You may even see a black rhino!

S2MA values environmental and cultural sustainability. We support the local community and partner with well-established Tanzanian operators. You will trek with experienced S2MA guides and local, bilingual guides for a rich cultural experience. This is a supported trek, giving you the best chance of summit success! You will carry a small daypack with personal items and your large duffel will be portered. Evenings will be spent enjoying delicious meals and drinking in the intoxicating scenery of the four distinct ecological climate zones of Mt. Kilimanjaro.

To prepare you for success, pre-trip video calls will be scheduled to assist team members with physical preparation, personal gear, and individual logistics. Team members are invited for optional conditioning treks in the Virginia Blue Ridge Mountains. S2MA guides are also available for personalized consultation meetings to enhance your preparation and success.

Cost & Services: Contact us for trip cost and safari add-on options

Included: Pre-trip meetings/consultation, conditioning treks, in-country guide service, meals (as indicated in itinerary), in-country ground transportation, double occupancy accommodation (single accommodations may be available on request with additional charge), backcountry permits/registration, national park entry fees.

Not included: personal equipment (gear list will be provided), flights, travel insurance, tips/gratuities, airport/arrival fees, personal expenditures (trail snacks, purchases, etc.)

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Itinerary dates, days, and activities are subject to change while in-country as we plan around weather and other unpredictable events.
Lodging is double occupancy unless otherwise indicated.

In-Country Itinerary

Day 1

Objective: Early Arrival

Lodging: Arusha Lodge

Meals: None

Summary: Welcome to Arusha, Tanzania. Members arrive at Kilimanjaro International Airport throughout the day. S2MA will meet you at the airport and transfer you to the hotel accommodations in Arusha.

Day 2

Objective: Rest Day / Explore Arusha

Lodging: Arusha Lodge

Meals: Breakfast

Summary: Rest day in preparation for departure to Kilimanjaro National Park. Members may also opt to walk into the city center to visit the local markets. City guides and vehicle transportation are available for your convenience. In-country briefings, team orientation and a final gear check will be conducted in the evening.

Day 3

Objective: Simba Camp / First Cave Camp (Elevation: 8612' / 2625 m)

Duration: Elevation Gain: 2297' (700 m) Distance: 4.4 mi (7 km) Time: 4-5 hrs

Lodging: High Altitude 4-Season Tent

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Summary: We wake early to drive to the Kilimanjaro National Park office to complete permit registrations at the Marangu Gate. We'll enjoy lunch and start at the Rongai trailhead by early afternoon. The climb begins at the village of Nale Moru (6398') on a small path that winds through local farm fields and pine forests. The track then climbs consistently through rainforest that shelters a variety of wildlife, including the Kilimanjaro Colobus monkey. These monkeys are black with a long cape of white hair and a flowing white tail. Their distinctive calls are haunting in the evening hours. Towards Simba Camp, the forest begins to thin out at the edge of the moorland zone where we can enjoy extensive views over the Kenyan plains.

Day 4

Objective: Second Cave Camp (Elevation: 11322' / 3450 m)

Duration: Elevation Gain: 2789' (850 m) Distance: 3.7 mi (6 km) Time: 4-5 hrs

Lodging: High Altitude 4-Season Tent

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Summary: The morning walk is a steady ascent to an area known as the 'Second Cave'. The high moorland environment is carpeted with heather, erica and other flowering plants as we move higher toward Kibo. We'll enjoy our first view of the twin peaks of Kilimanjaro – Mawenzi and Kibo. We'll also have our first glimpse at the glacier crowning the eastern rim of Kilimanjaro's crater.

Day 5

Objective: Kikelewa Camp (Elevation: 12041' / 3670 m)

Duration: Elevation Gain: 558' (170 m) Distance: 5.6 mi (9 km) Time: 6-7 hrs

Lodging: High Altitude 4-Season Tent

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Summary: Advancing from Second Cave Camp, we trek southeast toward Mawenzi, an impressive tower of jagged rock on Kilimanjaro's eastern shoulder. We will ascend well beyond tree line during the day's trek, and we sometimes encounter cloud fronts passing across the high moorland. Our campsite is in a sheltered valley appointed by a small stream to replenish water, and groundsels and lobelias for our enjoyment.

Day 6

Objective: Mawenzi Tarn Camp (Elevation: 14206' / 4330 m)

Duration: Elevation Gain: 2165' (660 m) Distance: 3.1 mi (5 km) Time: 3-4 hrs

Lodging: High Altitude 4-Season Tent

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Summary: A short but steep climb up grassy slopes is rewarded by excellent views and a sense of open wilderness as we enter the high desert. We leave vegetation behind shortly before reaching the next camp at Mawenzi Tarn, situated in a cirque directly beneath the towering spires of Mawenzi. The afternoon will be free to rest or explore.

Day 7

Objective: Mawenzi Tarn Camp (Elev: 14206' / 4330 m)

Duration: TBD

Lodging: High Altitude 4-Season Tent

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Summary: We will stay a second night at Mawenzi Tarn acclimatizing. The day will be spent climbing high along the rocky ridge lines that ascend toward the peak. From camp, we'll be able to see across the sweeping saddle towards Kibo camp and the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro!

Day 8

Objective: Kibo Camp (Elevation: 15748' / 4800)

Duration: Elevation Gain: 1460' (445 m) Distance: 5.6 mi (9 km) Time: 3-5 hrs

Lodging: High Altitude 4-Season Tent

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Summary: The terrain changes to scree as we slowly ascend to the saddle between Kibo and Mawenzi Peaks. The landscape here is expansive and desolate. Cloud systems regularly roll across our route with changing pressure systems. From Kibo Camp, Uhuru Peak is very close. We can take in wonderful views of Mawenzi (16890') from our camp as we spend the remainder of the day resting and preparing for a very early departure for Kilimanjaro's summit. Members are encouraged to hydrate, nourish and rest. Your guides will also be checking in to ensure you're prepared for a summit bid.

Day 9

Objective: Summit (Elevation: 19344' / 5895 m) & Horombo Hut (Elevation: 12205' / 3720 m)

Duration: Elevation Gain: Kibo Camp to Gilman's Point: 2890' (881 m) Time: 5-6 hrs
Gilman's Point to Stella Point: 190' (58 m) Time: 2-3 hrs
Stella Point to Uhuru Peak: 534' (165 m). Time: 1-2 hrs
Total Ascent: 3.7 mi (6 km)

Elevation Loss: Uhuru Peak to Horombo Hut: 7136' (2175 m) Time: 5-6 hrs
Total Descent: 10 mi (16.1 km)

Lodging: High Altitude 4-Season Tent

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Summary: We'll wake up around midnight for a traditional alpine start. Our combined ascent and descent may take up to 14-16 hours. We navigate through the darkness as we make our way past Hans Meyer Cave to Gilman's Point (18638'). We'll enjoy the stars above before ascending toward Stella Point (18810'). This is a beautiful section of the route, navigating around massive volcanic pinnacles that circle the rim. The final stretch toward the summit is uniquely wonderful, as the volcanic rim is crowned with snowy glaciers with walls of blue ice. A thick cushion of clouds often rests several thousand feet below. Those arriving to the summit in the early morning are often graced with the sunrise as they make their final steps to Uhuru Peak. After taking in the beautiful view over the African continent, we descend to Horombo for rest and celebration!

Day 10

Objective: Mweka Gate (Elevation: 5412' / 1650 m) & Arusha

Duration: Elevation Loss: 6793' (2071 m) Distance: 12 mi (19.3 km) Time: 5-6 hours

Lodging: Arusha Lodge

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Summary: Our descent from Horombo Hut (12205') continues through open moorlands, forest glades and into the rainforest to the park gate at Mweka. From Mweka gate we return to our lodge in Arusha by vehicle and celebrate our accomplishment. This is typically accompanied with several bottles of Tusker, a local beverage! S2MA invites you to a final team dinner to celebrate your climb of Mount Kilimanjaro!

Day 11

Objective: Return Home

Lodging: None

Meals: Breakfast

Summary: After fond farewells, team members returning home will be transported to the airport. Members opting for the safari will continue on to their first big game adventure, with spectacular views of elephants, zebras, giraffes, wildebeests, and many other exotic flora and fauna that Tanzania has to offer.

Day 11-13 3-Day Safari Add-On

Tour Lake Manyara, Ngorongoro Crater and Tarangire!