

TANZANIA

6 DAYS / 5 NIGHTS

Kilimanjaro Umbwe Route — 6-Day Direct Ascent

Kilimanjaro's steepest and most direct route: six demanding days from the southern forest straight up to the Barranco Valley and on to Uhuru Peak — for fit, experienced trekkers who want a quiet, challenging climb.

EDITORIAL OVERVIEW

Experience Overview

The Umbwe Route is Kilimanjaro's steepest and most direct path to the summit, and one of the least used. It climbs relentlessly through ancient, moss-laden forest on narrow ridges before breaking out above the tree line with dramatic views of Kibo's southern glaciers.

A short, steep approach

From Umbwe Gate on the southern slopes, the trail gains altitude very quickly: you reach Umbwe Cave Camp in the forest on the first day and Barranco Camp, below the towering Barranco Wall, on the second. From there the route joins the southern circuit, crossing the Barranco Wall to Karanga and Barafu Camp before the midnight summit attempt via Stella Point to Uhuru Peak (5,895 m).

Who it suits

Because the altitude gain on the first two days is rapid, this route is best suited to fit hikers who are comfortable on steep terrain and ideally have previous high-altitude experience. The reward is a quiet first half of the climb, often without other groups, and a raw, adventurous feel. If you are new to altitude, we recommend the Machame or Lemosho Route instead.

SIGNATURE MOMENTS

Highlights

- ★ Kilimanjaro's steepest and most direct route
- ★ One of the quietest trails on the mountain
- ★ Ancient moss-laden forest hung with old man's beard lichen
- ★ Barranco Camp beneath the Barranco Wall and the Western Breach
- ★ A real challenge for experienced, fit trekkers
- ★ Professional KINAPA-licensed mountain team
- ★ Joins the southern circuit for the summit attempt

SAFARI ROUTE

Journey Route

Follow your journey across Tanzania's iconic landscapes

SAFARI ROUTE OVERVIEW

Route map will appear once destinations are assigned.

ROUTE SUMMARY

Route summary will appear once destinations are assigned.

Itinerary

Your day-by-day journey through Tanzania

DAY 1

Umbwe Gate to Umbwe Cave Camp (2,850 m)



After a briefing in Moshi, drive to Umbwe Gate (1,600 m), register with the national park and meet your crew. The trail climbs straight up a narrow, forested ridge between two deep river gorges, using tree roots as steps on the steeper sections. The forest is dense and atmospheric, with towering trees, moss and hanging lichen. Arrive at Umbwe Cave Camp, set in the upper forest. Distance about 11 km, walking time 6–7 hours, with around 1,250 m of ascent. Overnight: Umbwe Cave Camp (Full Board)



DAY 2

Umbwe Cave Camp to Barranco Camp (3,960 m)

Continue up the ridge as the forest gives way to giant heather and moorland. The trail is steep and exposed in places, with spectacular views of the Western Breach and Kibo's glaciers opening up ahead. Descend slightly into the Barranco Valley, a sheltered hollow filled with giant groundsels, to Barranco Camp at the foot of the Barranco Wall. Here the Umbwe joins the southern circuit used by the Machame and Lemosho routes. Distance about 6 km, walking time 4–5 hours. Overnight: Barranco Camp (Full Board)

DAY 3

Barranco Wall to Karanga Camp (3,995 m)

Climb the Barranco Wall, a steep but non-technical scramble of about 250 metres with superb views of the southern ice fields from the top. Continue across ridges and valleys to Karanga Camp, the last water point. In the afternoon your guide leads a short acclimatisation walk above camp before returning to rest. Distance about 5 km, walking time 4–5 hours. Overnight: Karanga Camp (Full Board)





DAY 4

Karanga Camp to Barafu Camp (4,673 m)

A short but steady climb over rocky ground brings you to Barafu Camp, the base camp for the summit. Spend the afternoon resting, drinking plenty of water and preparing your clothing and headtorch. Your guides check your health and explain the plan for summit night, then serve an early dinner. Distance about 4 km, walking time 4–5 hours. Overnight: Barafu Camp (Full Board)

DAY 5

Summit Night — Uhuru Peak (5,895 m) and Descent to Mweka Camp

Start around midnight and climb the steep scree by headtorch. Reach Stella Point (5,756 m) on the crater rim around dawn, then continue for about an hour along the rim to Uhuru Peak (5,895 m), the highest point in Africa. After photographs, descend to Barafu Camp for a rest and a meal, then continue down to Mweka Camp. A demanding day of 12–15 hours in total. Overnight: Mweka Camp (3,100 m, Full Board)





DAY 6

Descent to Mweka Gate

Descend through the rainforest to Mweka Gate (1,640 m), sign out of the park and receive your summit certificate. Say thank you and farewell to your mountain crew. Distance about 10 km, walking time 3–4 hours. Transfer to your hotel in Moshi or Arusha. End of trek.

WHERE YOU'LL STAY

Accommodation

Accommodation recommendations will be finalized with your chosen travel dates.

PACKAGE DETAILS

What's Included

Included

- ✓ All KINAPA park fees
- ✓ KINAPA-licensed lead guide and assistants
- ✓ Porters and private camp chef
- ✓ Quality camping equipment
- ✓ All meals on the mountain
- ✓ Purified drinking water
- ✓ Pulse oximetry health checks
- ✓ Summit certificate
- ✓ Airport transfers
- ✓ Pre-trek hotel night in Moshi

Excluded

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Travel insurance (mandatory)
- ✗ Personal climbing gear
- ✗ Gratuities for mountain crew
- ✗ Personal snacks

BESPOKE PLANNING

Ready to plan your journey?

Share your preferred travel dates and let us tailor this experience around your pace, interests, and preferences.

VIEW THIS TOUR

PLAN YOUR SAFARI

LESS ON OURSELVES, MORE ON OTHERS

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VIEW ITINERARY

END OF ITINERARY