

Final Briefing – AWESOME CLIMBS

CONTACT INFORMATION

Local office

If you experience any problems once you are on your way to Tanzania, or while you are in country, our local contact in Moshi is your first point of contact. In particular, if you have arranged an airport transfer and your flight is delayed, please contact our team so that they can re-arrange your collection.

The number below includes the international dialling code. You will need to add this number and omit the zero if you are calling from a mobile phone. If you are using a landline in Tanzania, just start with the zero in brackets.

Contact telephone: +255 (0)6275 38215 or +255 (0)7575 47179

Lead guide

Once we are on our climb, our lead guide is in charge. If you have any issue, whether it relates to equipment, food or health, please tell Jenné or Steve right away and we will speak to our guide. It is much better if you allow us to deal with any problems on the spot, rather than let them spoil your climb. Our guide is in contact with the office in Moshi if needed.

Contact information for friends and family

If you wish to leave a contact number for friends and family, it is best if they contact Carrie Castino at (734) 658-7288. If Carrie is unavailable or if the matter is considered an emergency, they can contact the office in Moshi on the number given above.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Travel insurance

It is your responsibility to take out travel insurance that fully covers you for the duration of your trip. Your insurance should include regular cover, such as trip cancellation, missed flight, medical expenses and loss of personal items. In addition you will need to be covered for all the activities and excursions that you are going to participate in. To climb Kilimanjaro, you must specifically be covered for trekking to 6000m.

Please keep a copy of your policy in your day sack at all times. This should include your policy number and the emergency contact phone number for the insurer, in case we need to contact them on your behalf.

Passport

Please check that your passport is valid for 6 months beyond the date that you are due to arrive in Tanzania. You will need at least one blank visa page in your passport. If you do not have a passport, or need to apply for a renewal, be sure to allow plenty of time for your application to be processed.

Visas

Most people travelling to Tanzania will require a tourist visa. This includes citizens of the UK, EU, USA, Canada and Australia. The visa can be requested in advance from your nearest Tanzanian Embassy or High Commission. Alternatively you may be able to apply on arrival at Kilimanjaro Airport, but you may have to queue at the immigration desk. Certain nationalities not listed above cannot obtain their visa on arrival and must apply in advance for a referred visa. Please check with your nearest Tanzanian Embassy to see if this condition applies to you. Visas are valid for 3 months from the date of issue, so do not apply too early.

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Airport security checks

In 2014, new security checks were introduced at many international airports, including the UK and USA. In addition to existing security checks, passengers may have to prove the electronic devices in their carry-on luggage are charged and you may therefore have to switch on devices such as tablets, phones and e-books to show the security team. If the device does not switch on, it would be retained by the security team, or alternatively you would need to change to a later flight while the device is charged. Please ensure that all electronic devices you are carrying in your hand luggage are fully charged before you travel. If you are transferring between flights, avoid depleting the power on your devices on your first flight, as you may not be able to charge them again before the security checks for your second flight.

Deep-Vein Thrombosis

There are a number of recommendations that are thought to reduce the risk of DVT when travelling on long-haul flights (those over 8 hours). These include avoiding alcohol and drinking water and soft drinks to remain well hydrated, stretching and moving around the cabin, and wearing compression socks.

Travelling to Kilimanjaro

Our top tip when you travel to Kilimanjaro is to wear your hiking boots and try to pack essential items including medicines in your carry-on luggage. Luggage delays are fairly common, particularly if changing flights in Nairobi. If your bags are delayed, we can kit you out to begin your climb on time, but nothing can replace your own worn-in boots.

ARRIVAL IN TANZANIA

Arrival at Kilimanjaro airport

After you have passed through immigration and baggage reclaim, make your way to the main doors. Your driver will be waiting outside, holding a AWESOME CLIMBS sign. We will make every effort to be there as well. We can't wait to see you! It takes about 1 hour to drive to Moshi.

Lost / delayed luggage

The procedure for lost or delayed baggage is as follows:

- Determine what items are missing and work out a plan to replace each essential item.
- If your luggage does not arrive by 6pm on the evening before the climb starts, we recommend buying and/or hiring equipment and clothing in preparation.
- We can arrange sleeping bag hire for you, to be paid locally.
- We can lend you wet weather gear, t-shirts and fleeces from our own stores. All items must be returned to the Lead Guide at the end of your climb. A charge of \$10 per item will be made, to be paid locally, to cover the cost of cleaning.
- We will take you to shops where you can buy toiletries, or rent further equipment.
- If your luggage arrives after you have begun the climb, a porter will bring it up to you on the mountain.

If your luggage has been delayed or lost, we will help you as much as we can, but you will need to pay for all associated costs locally. This can include the costs of taxis for shopping, trips to the airport to collect bags, and the cost of sending another porter up the mountain to deliver your bag. We can provide you with receipts so that you can make a claim through the airline or your insurance.

Currency

The local currency is the Tanzanian Shilling. This is a closed currency so you will not be able to buy any before you leave home. It is advisable to travel with US Dollars which are accepted in many hotels and restaurants. US notes need to be post-2006, clean and unturned. If you wish to change some local currency, there is a

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currency exchange at the airport in the Baggage Claim area. Alternatively, we can help you find a bank or ATM in Moshi.

If you are taking a credit or debit card for emergency funds, you will need to advise your bank or card issuer that you will be using it in Tanzania, or you may find that it won't work. American Express is not accepted in most places in Tanzania.

Equipment and clothing

Prior to your climb we will provide you with an Equipment List. Please make sure that you have everything you need before you begin the climb. There are very few shops in Moshi providing trekking equipment so you do need to source as much as possible from home. If you think you are missing an important piece of equipment when you arrive in Moshi, please let us know straight away so they can help find a replacement for you.

Gear Rental

The following equipment is available to rent from our team in Tanzania. When you attend our Pre-Climb Briefing, just let our guide know which items you would like to hire. Rental is paid locally in US Dollars, and our team can only accept cash.

- Four Season Mountain Hardwear Lamina -30 Sleeping Bags - \$50 per climb
- Trekking Poles - \$20 per climb

All rental equipment must be packed inside your main bag. The sleeping bags and sleeping mats weigh around 2kg each and count towards your total bag weight.

There are a few rental shops in Moshi where additional items can be rented, but we cannot guarantee what items will be available, or vouch for the condition and quality of this kit. If you plan to visit a rental shop, make sure that you have enough time available when you arrive, as there will not be time to rent from shops on the morning the climb begins.

Pre-climb briefing

We will have a briefing at our hotel the evening before our climb begins. We will discuss the plans for the climb with you, check that you have the correct equipment, arrange any equipment rental and answer any last minute questions. You have already certified on your participation agreement that your resting pulse rate is below 100. This will be tested again and if your resting pulse is above 100 you will be required to see a doctor before starting your climb. Please bring your passport to the briefing with you, so we can check the details required for registration at the park gate. If you are arriving on a late evening flight, don't worry. We will arrange to brief you in the morning before you set off for the climb.

Climbing bag weight

The Kilimanjaro Park Authority enforces a strict limit of 15kg (33 pounds) per porter for client baggage. This weight limit includes any sleeping bag or other equipment that you rent from us. This limit is more than adequate for your needs, but do be aware of it when you are shopping and packing for your trip. Your bag will be weighed at the hotel before we leave for the climb, and if it is over the limit you will need to take items out and leave them behind at the hotel. Alternatively, if you wish to take an over-weight bag, you will need to hire an additional porter which will cost \$25 per day.

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HOTEL INFORMATION

Hotel accommodation

All of our hotel accommodation pre- and post-climb is based in Moshi. Your itinerary shows what hotel accommodation and meals are included in your trip. Where your hotel is booked on a B&B basis, you can usually purchase snacks and meals at the hotel, which can be paid in Tanzanian Shillings, or often in US Dollars. Please be aware that not all hotels accept credit cards.

Hotel safety

Fire safety: When you arrive at the hotel, take a few minutes to familiarise yourself with the procedures in the event of a fire. In particular take note of the layout of the building and your escape routes and fire exits.

Swimming pools: Hotel pools may not have life guards, depth markings or non-slip surfaces surrounding them. Please check the layout and depth of the pool before you enter it.

Food and drink

There are plenty of restaurants in Moshi if you do not wish to eat at the hotel. Use your common sense when choosing where and what to eat. Always drink bottled water and avoid ice in soft drinks.

Valuables

Please keep your passport, money and valuables on you at all times, or make use of hotel safes where available. Keep your hotel room locked, even if you only leave the room for a few minutes.

Left luggage

Our pre-climb hotel has a secure storage room where you can leave anything that you do not need on the climb. Make sure that you have a spare suitcase or bag for anything you are leaving in storage.

Electrical sockets

Tanzania uses 2 types of electrical socket – type G which are the 3 square pins used in the UK, and type D which are the 3 round pins commonly found in India. Both types are 220v. The UK type are the most common socket in the hotels we use.

Outages in Moshi

Tanzania is still a developing country and it is not unusual for there to be cut offs in both electricity and water supply. Unfortunately we cannot guarantee that the hotel will have hot water for showers during our stay. The hotel will help if they can, but the outages are outside their control.

Getting around

Take care when walking around Moshi, as traffic may be coming from an unfamiliar direction, and may not stop at pedestrian crossings. If you travel by taxi, make sure that it is licensed; if possible, ask your hotel to book one for you.

Vehicles and driving standards

We use a high standard of vehicle and driver for all of our vehicle transfers. However, in Tanzania it is not a legal requirement to have seatbelts installed in the back of vehicles. We do try to only use vehicles that have rear seatbelts fitted, but this is not always possible. If you are unhappy about any vehicle or the standard of driving, please speak to the driver or our local office immediately. Please be aware that vehicles are regularly stopped by the police in Tanzania to check the driver's documentation, which can seem quite intimidating. If your vehicle is stopped, this is not a reflection of the state of your vehicle or your driver's ability.

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HEALTH INFORMATION

Vaccinations

The standard vaccinations you require are tetanus, typhoid, diphtheria and hepatitis A, but you should always speak to your doctor or travel clinic for the most up to date advice. You will also need to show a Yellow Fever Certificate if you are arriving in Tanzania from a country with a high risk of Yellow Fever. If you are flying directly from Europe or the USA, you do not need to have the Yellow Fever vaccination. Transfers through airports such as Nairobi or Addis Ababa are allowed provided they are less than 12 hours and you have not left the airport.

Malaria

Tanzania is a malaria zone so you should take precautions to prevent catching the disease. There are no mosquitos present on Kilimanjaro above 2000m, but they are present in the town of Moshi and also other areas of Tanzania you may be intending to visit such as the safari parks or Zanzibar. Even if you are only going to be in Moshi for the day before and day after your climb, we do recommend that you take malaria tablets. You should also try to prevent mosquito bites by using a mosquito repellent containing DEET, and wearing long sleeves and trousers at dawn and dusk.

Altitude sickness

Altitude sickness (also known as Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), hypobaropathy or soroche) is an illness brought on by exposure to low air pressure, and in particular low partial oxygen pressure, and will be experienced by any climbers at high altitudes, most commonly above 2400m. The condition is caused by exerting yourself at high altitude, especially if not well acclimatised. Your trek up Kilimanjaro has been planned to help you acclimatise as well as possible, but the following will also help you to adjust:

Walking pace – your breathing rate should be low enough to keep up a normal conversation while you walk. If you are panting or breathing hard, you are going too fast. Our guide will set a suitable walking pace and you are under no pressure to keep up with other people in our group. If our pace is too fast for you, please slow down and let us know. We will make the appropriate accommodations.

Drink plenty – being fully hydrated makes a big difference, so you should aim to drink much more than you think you need. You must drink a minimum of three litres of fluid every day.

Diamox – Research has shown that Diamox can help to avoid AMS as it can speed up the acclimatisation process. In many countries it is a prescription drug so you will need to consult your doctor about whether it is suitable for you. Diamox can only help prevent the symptoms of AMS – it does not make you immune to AMS – so symptoms can still occur and you do have to take notice, as it means that the drug is not being effective and you are not acclimatising. Diamox is taken as a preventative measure before you start ascending, not as a cure once the symptoms have developed.

Dehydration

It is very easy to become dehydrated at high altitude. You will be breathing more quickly due to the lower air pressure, so you will be losing water from your lungs. You will also be sweating more, and may be unfortunate enough to suffer from diarrhoea. You therefore need to drink a lot more water than you normally would, and as a minimum you should drink at least 3 litres of fluids every day. Even if you don't feel thirsty, you should still aim to drink this amount – and more if possible. This is particularly important on your summit attempt, and could severely impact your ability to summit successfully. Be aware of the early signs of dehydration – thirst, headache, dry lips, nose or mouth, and fatigue.

Fitness and training

Climbing Kilimanjaro on one of our treks does not require an extreme level of fitness. Mental stamina is just as important, and the determination to just keep putting one foot in front of the other. To help prepare for your climb, you need to be comfortable walking for around 6-7 hours and the best training is to lace up your boots

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and get used to walking for extended periods, as it is walking every day for 7 or 8 days that trekkers find the most tiring. In addition, we recommend further exercises concentrating on the 3 S's:

Strength – basic strength training is important for both your upper body and your leg muscles. Shoulder presses and flies work well for your upper body, while squats and lunges are ideal for your legs.

Stamina – build up your cardiovascular system with 30 minutes of strenuous exercise once a week. Running, cycling, cross-fit and Zumba classes all work well.

Stretching – many sports injuries are a result of poor stretching, and this is also true of trekking, where repetitive movement puts a lot of strain on muscles and joints. To loosen your muscles, we recommend you get in the habit of spending 10 minutes each day stretching your main muscle groups.

ON YOUR CLIMB

The Guide's word is final

Once you begin your climb, our Lead Guide is responsible for our health and welfare. It is important that you listen to all his instructions and follow them carefully. The Guide's ruling on any matter is final, especially in relation to an early descent. If the Guide has decided that you are endangering yourself, our fellow climbers or our crew by remaining on the mountain, then you have to descend.

Daily health checks

We will carry out a health check twice a day in which we will fill out a Lake Louise scoresheet, a well-tested method for assessing the symptoms of altitude sickness. We will also use a pulse oximeter to measure your pulse and blood oxygen saturation level. It is vital that you answer all of the questions honestly and report any changes in your health that may affect your ability to continue.

Typical climbing routine

Our guide will wake you up between 06:00 and 06:30 with warm water for washing. You will then need to get your bag packed. You will have breakfast between 07:00 and 07:30, during which time the porters will pack your tent away. During breakfast, our guide will brief you on the day's itinerary and carry out your health check. We will then have a morning meditation and lesson. We aim to set off from camp between 08:00 and 08:30.

When you reach the next camp, you will be given hot water for washing, and we will serve hot drinks and snacks. We may have time for a short acclimatisation hike, where we will trek up to a higher altitude before returning to camp for dinner. This opportunity to 'walk high, sleep low' will help with our acclimatisation.

After dinner we will conduct your second health check and have our evening lesson. The guides will also talk about the next day's climb and discuss any concerns you may have. Do let us or the guides know if you are experiencing any difficulty or discomfort.

Temperature

Due to its height, Kilimanjaro creates its own climate which can be extremely variable. Temperatures change considerably depending on altitude and time of day, and you should be prepared for wet days and cold nights. Your packing should include plenty of layers to help you regulate your temperature, and a full set of waterproofs which you should carry with you in your day sack. In Moshi, you can expect an average temperature of around 70°F to 80°F (21°C to 27°C), while at the summit, Uhuru Peak, the night time temperatures can be as low as 20°F to -20°F (-7°C to -29°C).

Camping & Mess Tents

We use top quality high altitude mountaineering tents – Mountain Hardwear Trango 3 – to keep you dry and comfortable on your climb. These are proper lightweight mountain tents, designed to cope with extreme weather, and may be smaller than standard tents that you are used to. The dusty conditions on Kilimanjaro can

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cause the zips to jam. If you have any problems with your tent zip, please ask your crew for assistance rather than trying to force the zip.

We take a separate mess tent with a table and proper chairs where you will take your meals.

We also provide a separate toilet tent for the group to use which will be erected at each campsite.

Drinking water

On the mountain we use Water Guard purification tablets to treat all of our drinking water. Each morning while you have breakfast, we will fill up your bottles or hydration bladder with at least 3 litres of water.

Hygiene

It is important to keep up a high level of hygiene in a very difficult environment in order to avoid stomach upsets. We supply anti-bacterial hand gel in the toilet tent, but it is a good idea to carry your own supply to maintain cleanliness during the day.

Summit climb

Most of our summit attempts take place at night, and we will wake you up around 23:00. You will need to prepare your summit kit before you go to bed, as it is going to be pitch black when you get up. In particular, make sure that you have put some new batteries in your head torch.

You should expect to wear all of your clothing layers for this part of the climb, including your thermal layer, fleece layer, core jacket and trousers. It is important to keep your extremities warm, so make sure you have thermal socks, warm gloves/mittens, a warm hat and a neck scarf for your face and throat. As soon as the sun comes up it becomes considerably warmer, so you need to be able to strip layers off as the day goes on.

Once you climb above 5000 metres, everything will freeze so you need to use a wide-mouthed Nalgene bottle for your water instead of a hydration bladder. Water starts freezing from the top, so pack the bottle upside-down in your daysack, and wrap it in a spare sock for additional insulation. If you do want to use a hydration bladder, make sure the pipe is insulated or keep it tucked inside your jacket. You should still take 1 litre of water in a bottle as a back up.

Snacks are essential for your summit attempt. Nuts and seeds, biscuits, savoury snacks, chocolate and boiled sweets are good choices. Try to avoid anything made with honey or syrup, or anything 'chewy', as these are likely to freeze solid. Put them in your pockets for quick access and make sure that all wrappers are taken back off the mountain.

Crew tips

We understand that tipping is not a standard practice in all countries, but it is a common practice on Kilimanjaro. Tips are always discretionary, and your decision to tip should be based on the service you received from the crew, not whether or not you reached the summit. Tips can be made in US dollars or Tanzanian Shillings (US notes should be post-2006, clean and unturned).

We support the Kilimanjaro Porters Assistance Project (KPAP) and follow their guidelines for tipping. Their recommended rates are \$5-7/day per porter, \$12/day per cook, \$12/day per assistant guide and \$20/day for your lead guide. These rates are per group, not per trekker. We will send you an estimate of the crew numbers for our group prior to our climb. The final numbers cannot be confirmed until we reach the park gate and all the bags and equipment are weighed.

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We hold a tipping ceremony at the final campsite on the mountain. We will pool our tip money and present it to the guides, cooks and porters.

Descent protocol

We want to see you at the top of Kilimanjaro and our guides will do their utmost to help you summit, but your welfare is their number one priority. If they have any concerns about your health, they will keep an eye on you to see if your condition improves before they decide if you should descend. For mild conditions (eg altitude sickness, fatigue, diarrhea), climbers will descend on foot, accompanied by an assistant guide. For more serious illness or injury, an emergency evacuation may be required, using a stretcher. If a climber needs to be given emergency oxygen, then they will automatically be required to descend.

Any climber who descends early will be taken to the doctor/hospital for a check up, or otherwise will need to sign a waiver to say they did not wish to receive further medical advice. All additional costs incurred as a result of an early descent, including extra nights at the hotel, must be paid locally.