

Summit Mount Kilimanjaro

“AFS Climb to the Roof of Africa”

Sept 12-23, 2020 (Small group just for AFS Fitbits)

Summiting Kilimanjaro is an attainable goal by following the Marangu route. Used by almost 40% of all climbers, it has comfortable, mountain huts accommodations with solar power lighting along the way. This is classified as a moderate trek rather than a climb and is suitable for those adventurers who are not particularly experienced in the mountains, but you must be relatively fit. The views from Gillman’s Point as the sun rises behind Mawenzi on a clear morning are absolutely magnificent. The Rift Valley, Mt. Meru and the Masai Steppes stand out from the endless plains, almost three vertical miles below.

Sep 12 / 13 - Depart the USA

Detailed AFS Trip Tips emailed to participants to follow. Air is easy roundtrip to Kili. Wait until we firm group air on Turkish for the best price and route than you can decide. Sept 12 you will need to be in New York (JFK) well before midnight to connect with your international group flight which leaves just after 12am, in the wee morning hours of September 13.

Sep 14 - Arrive Kilimanjaro – Land portion begins. D

Welcome to Africa! You will be greeted at the Kilimanjaro airport by our guides and transferred to Springlands Hotel, located in Moshi Town. These are the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro and the perfect spot for starting our Kili expedition. Enjoy the property’s pool or bar and just relax. Today, you will have an extensive briefing by your guides about what lies ahead as you climb the tallest free standing mountain in the world!

If time permits for tours -

- Optional – An area tour which includes waterfalls, a culture visit to the local village and a tour of coffee plantations. The price includes your guide, driver and a lunch of traditional Nyama choma (roast meat), unripe banana soup and drinks. - Min 4 people. Or Boma Bush Dinner with the Masai.

Overnight: Springlands Hotel (B)

Sep 15 – The Kilimanjaro Experience begins! BLD

After breakfast, we head to the Kilimanjaro National Park gate which lies at the edge of Marangu and an elevation of more than 6 thousand feet above sea level. After completing our registration formalities, we start our upward trek, climbing 3 to 5 hours through a beautiful, unspoiled forest, enjoying lunch along the way. The forest finally opens up to a clearing and our accommodations for the night - Mandara Hut – located at almost 9,000 feet. (We provide your sleeping bags and mattresses.)

Mandara includes a group of 'A' frame wooden huts which feature comfortable dormitory style rooms. Water is piped onto site from a spring above for clean water as well as flush toilets. There is plenty of birdlife to enjoy as well as some monkeys near the huts. You can rest and enjoy the beautiful forest or perhaps take a short hike to take in the volcanic remains of the nearby Maundi Crater. (Avg. 5 miles hiking 4-5 hours to 6,000 to 8,500' or 2700m)

Overnight: Mandara Hut

Sept 16 - Horombo

BLD

Today, we have a 4 to 6 hour trek ahead of us. The first part of the walk is a steep ascent through the forest, but the path soon opens out into grassy moorland and in clear weather, there are breathtaking views of Kibo and Mawenzi peaks. It's a steady climb ahead through the moorland zone, containing giant heathers and flowering herbs called groundsel. We eventually reach the hut complex at Horombo - almost 2 and a half miles above sea level.

Here, we truly get the sense of being above the clouds. The Horombo huts are similar to Mandara, but this is a larger complex. Here, too are spring fed waters piped in to handle water as well as the toilet facilities. Sunrises and sunsets are often spectacular, and the site is close to the strikingly beautiful glaciated dome of Kibo. (Avg. 6-hour hike, 7 miles to 37,000m)

Overnight: Horombo Hut

Sep 17 - Extra day for Acclimatization BLD

There's no need to pack today because it's all about getting acclimatized. You can take in some sightseeing, but it's important to use this time to have our bodies get used to the altitude so the rest of the trek will be easier. Our past groups found this to be crucial.

We'll walk up the southern slopes of Mawenzi, to get some of the best views possible of Kibo as well as a gorgeous panorama overlooking the wild and inhospitable desert of the Saddle. We also visit places such as the strange Zebra Rocks -rocks streaked over the centuries by water until they resemble the flanks of a zebra.

Overnight: Horombo Hut (3,800m)

Sep18 - Saddle Between Mawenzi and Kibo BLD

We climb very gradually towards what looks like a lunar desert of the Saddle between Mawenzi and Kibo. During the five hour hike, the terrain changes to broken rock fragments known as scree as we experience the sense of high altitude wilderness. Our goal is to reach Kibo Hut by midday. Located at an elevation of almost 3 miles, it is at the bottom of the crater wall.

Kibo is a stone built block house with a small dining area and a number of dormitory rooms leading off a main corridor. At this elevation and the water has to be brought in.

We'll spend the remainder of the day resting and eating in preparation for the final climb before a very early night! (Avg. 6-8 hour hike, 6 miles to 4703m)

Overnight: Kibo Hut

Sept 19 - Summit Day BLD

A long day, but so worth it. We have an 11 to 15-hour day ahead of us, starting our ascent by flashlight at about 1 AM. The goal is to reach Gillman's Point by sunrise. The initial climb is over loose volcanic scree, but there are some well-graded zig-zags. A slow, but steady pace will have us up to Gillman's in about five or six hours. We will rest there and take in the goose bump-inducing sunrise, looking out over the world three miles below.

(If you are up for it, you can make the additional three-hour round trip from here along the crater rim to Uhuru Peak. Elevation there is over 3 and a half miles and you will pass close to spectacular glaciers that still occupy most of the summit area.)

Then – it's time to start heading back down. The descent is surprisingly fast and we return to Horombo for the night. (Avg. 6-8 hour hiking 10 miles to 5895m or 19,340')

Overnight: Horombo Hut

Sept 20 – Final Descent Horombo to Marengo Gate BLD

Today is the victory lap! We head down towards Mandara, with rocky terrain giving way to green, lush forest. We retrace our steps with a pleasant moorland walk down to the National Park gates.

After we finish the climb, we are picked up and head back to Springlands Hotel for overnight and an AFS farewell celebratory dinner with your certificate of completion. (Avg. 5-7 hour hike, 12 miles at 12,000-6000')

Overnight: Springlands Hotel (1 night)

Sep 21 - Depart for home B

Following breakfast, we are transferred to Kilimanjaro airport for our departure flight.

Go to top of page and click the next tab for info on optional Serengeti Safari extension! (Return home Sep 25).

INCLUDES:

- 4-Star hotel accommodation in Arusha and multi share Alpine huts with prepped beds per itinerary based on twin share
- All airport transfers by private, air-conditioned coach (Any individuals travelling outside the group arrangement must organize own transportation)
- Arrival Meet & Greet guide assistance, Mountain guide and porters.
- Sightseeing and admissions as per the itinerary
- Local taxes on accommodation and sightseeing tours,
- Meals as indicated on itinerary (B-full breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner) Full Board on the mountain. Meals are high carb and basic (suitable for climbing). Special diets can be provided for but only with advance notice.
- All park fees, hut fees and rescue fees. Rescue fees cover evacuation to the gate only. Travelers must purchase insurance with medical and evacuation coverage.

Optional Serengeti Safari Extension

Sep 22 – Head to the Serengeti

B D

After breakfast, those who will be heading home with transfer to Arusha airport while the Big Game hunters, armed with our cameras head towards the **Serengeti**. Our home for two nights will be the exclusive Ngorongoro Farm House for two nights on the edge of the park. You'll fall in love with these small, colonial-style hotel built on a 500-acre coffee plantation. Each of the cottages has thatched roofs and verandas for you to enjoy the amazing views. Relax in the gardens or enjoy a spectacular sunset with the Oldeani volcano as a backdrop.

Overnight: Ngorongoro Farm House [link](#)

Sep 23 – Full Day Crater Tour

BLD

After breakfast, prepare for some breathtaking scenery as we head into the **Serengeti** our tour of the spectacular **Ngorongoro Crater** to witness one of the largest concentrations of wildlife in Africa. We descend by 4x4's into the 104 square mile caldera that boasts more than 30,000 animals. At 11 miles wide, Ngorongoro Crater the largest perfect caldera in the world. It was formed over eight million years ago with the collapse of the cone of an active volcano estimated to have been larger than Kilimanjaro. Mountain forests extend to the crater's lip. In the lowlands, there are acacia trees, swamps, and rivers. In this natural amphitheater, you can expect to find the Big Five as well as and a wide variety of bird species such as the Kori bustard and the black kite. We enjoy a picnic lunch in this wonderful microcosm of 3 different ecosystems teeming with wildlife.

Overnight: Ngorongoro Farm House

Sep 24 – Lake Manyara

B

This morning, we travel to a hidden treasure – **Lake Manyara National Park**. Small, but diverse, it borders the Rift Valley and has numerous ecosystems ranging from grasslands to hot springs to dense forests and steep mountainsides. Another wonderful game drive on the shores of Manyara teeming with buffalo, herds of elephants. Hippos and Masai Giraffe, as well as over 400 species of birds. All of the big cats can be found here but it's the lions that will get your attention. They are known for their habit of climbing trees!

By afternoon, we will be back into Arusha to start your journey back home.