



Trekking Mount Kenya

MAKE TRACKS FOR AFRICA

This information pack has been put together so that you can prepare for your safari. It has been developed over many years of experience overlanding. Please read it carefully.

Mount Kenya is Kenya's highest mountain and Africa's second highest after Kilimanjaro. The mountain has three peaks, of which Point Lenana is the highest peak accessible to trekkers at 4,985 metres.

Absolute Africa ensures that anyone who climbs with us is covered for their entire trek by membership with Amref, who operate specialist medical evacuation with advanced life support ambulances, paramedics and air rescue. This service is additional to and does not replace your travel insurance.

Index

[Back to Index](#)

Please click on any of these section names to go straight there.

Flights	Page 2
Insurance	Page 2
Visa requirements	Page 3
Pre and post climb information	Page 3
Health and immunisation	Page 5
Choosing the right route	Page 8
Money and budgeting	Page 9
What do I need to bring?	Page 10
Additional information	Page 13
Further reading	Page 14

Flights

When arranging your flights we suggest that you arrive in a day or so before your climb begins. Having a day spare to recuperate from your flight and relax, as well as to ensure you are feeling prepared for your climb, can be of real benefit. Return flights should be arranged to depart at least one day after your climb is scheduled to end.

At certain times of the year flight availability can become very tight and if you delay your booking you might have to pay a higher price. Please organize your flights as soon as you can once you decide to travel.

For this safari you should arrange Nairobi return flights.

There are several airlines that you can look at to accompany this trek including BA, KLM, Kenyan Airways, Virgin, Emirates, and Swiss Air.

We can help you with a flight quote. Please feel free to contact the office if you would like assistance.

If you have spare time in Nairobi either before or after your climb then there are short safaris as well as day trips that can be organized in conjunction with your trek. Many clients also enjoy relaxing on Zanzibar Island or the Kenyan Coast after their climb. Feel free to talk us about any extra arrangements you would like to make whilst in Africa.

Pre and post climb accommodation and transfers can all be arranged prior to departure to Nairobi airport. Please see the pre and post climb section below.

A friendly Reminder – When purchasing your flights, check whether your flight ticket already includes departure tax (if applicable) for the country you are flying out of at the end of your trip. If it does not, remember to keep the necessary funds aside in USD to make this payment.

Insurance

[Back to Index](#)

Your safety and enjoyment when traveling with Absolute Africa are of the utmost importance to us, which is why it is essential that you have arranged adequate travel insurance to cover your entire travel plans.

We are happy to introduce you to specialist insurance brokers Campbell Irvine, underwritten by Tokio Marine HCC International Insurance Company PLC. The cover includes a 24-Hour worldwide emergency medical service which is expert in providing friendly and professional emergency help.

Click on the following link to the page on our website to find out more: www.absoluteafrica.com/Insurance

Do note that is a condition of booking that you have contacted your insurers to confirm that the cover you have arranged is appropriate cover for climbing Mount Kenya and for any other arrangements you have made whilst in Africa.

When selecting insurance carefully consider the cancellation policy, as well as cover for any valuables you might take. If you buy insurance in the UK you should check your policy is valid if you are a non-UK resident and provision for one-way travel if this is required.

Remember when traveling it is important to take all sensible precautions in regards to your security and safety and health, including taking precautions to avoid illness such as malaria. We advise you to make an appointment with a travel clinic as soon as possible after deciding to travel. Your travel insurance might also be affected by the relevant government's Travel Advice for the countries you visit. Do stay up to date in regards to the latest official government Travel Advice.

Visa requirements

[Back to Index](#)

Your passport needs to be valid for at least 6 months after your trip finishes. Ensure as well you have adequate pages in your passport. As a guide then, we recommend you have a minimum of 3 blank pages for your visit to Kenya.

Visas for most passport holders for entry into Kenya can be arranged when you land in Nairobi. The visa is usually 50 USD, payable in USD cash.

This information covers current visa requirements for British, Australian, New Zealand, Irish, South African, German, French, Dutch, Canadian and American passport holders only. If your passport is not detailed above please do not hesitate to contact the office if you would like further details of your visa requirements.

Be aware that visa requirements can change without prior notice. This information is given as a guide only. We do ask that you also check your personal current visa requirements with the relevant embassies well in advance before you travel. Ultimately you are responsible for ensuring your visa arrangements are adequate for your trip. For more information on visas www.visahq.com or alternatively www.projectvisa.com

Pre and post climb information

[Back to Index](#)

Our pre and post climb accommodation is at **Wildebeest Eco Camp**, a permanent-tented camp based in peaceful gardens in the suburb of Karen in Nairobi.

As part of the Mount Kenya Trek package your accommodation in a dorm for the night before and the night after your climb is included in the price. Breakfast is also included.

Wildebeest Camp has a restaurant, bar, internet, and lockers in the dorms. The showers are usually hot.

If you would like any extra nights' accommodation either before or after your climb just let us know your needs on booking.

Airport transfers from Nairobi International airport are included in the price of your Mount Kenya climb to and from Wildebeest Camp.

Day trips available in Nairobi

If you wish we can arrange tours before or after your trek to take in some of the sights of Nairobi.

Nairobi Excursion

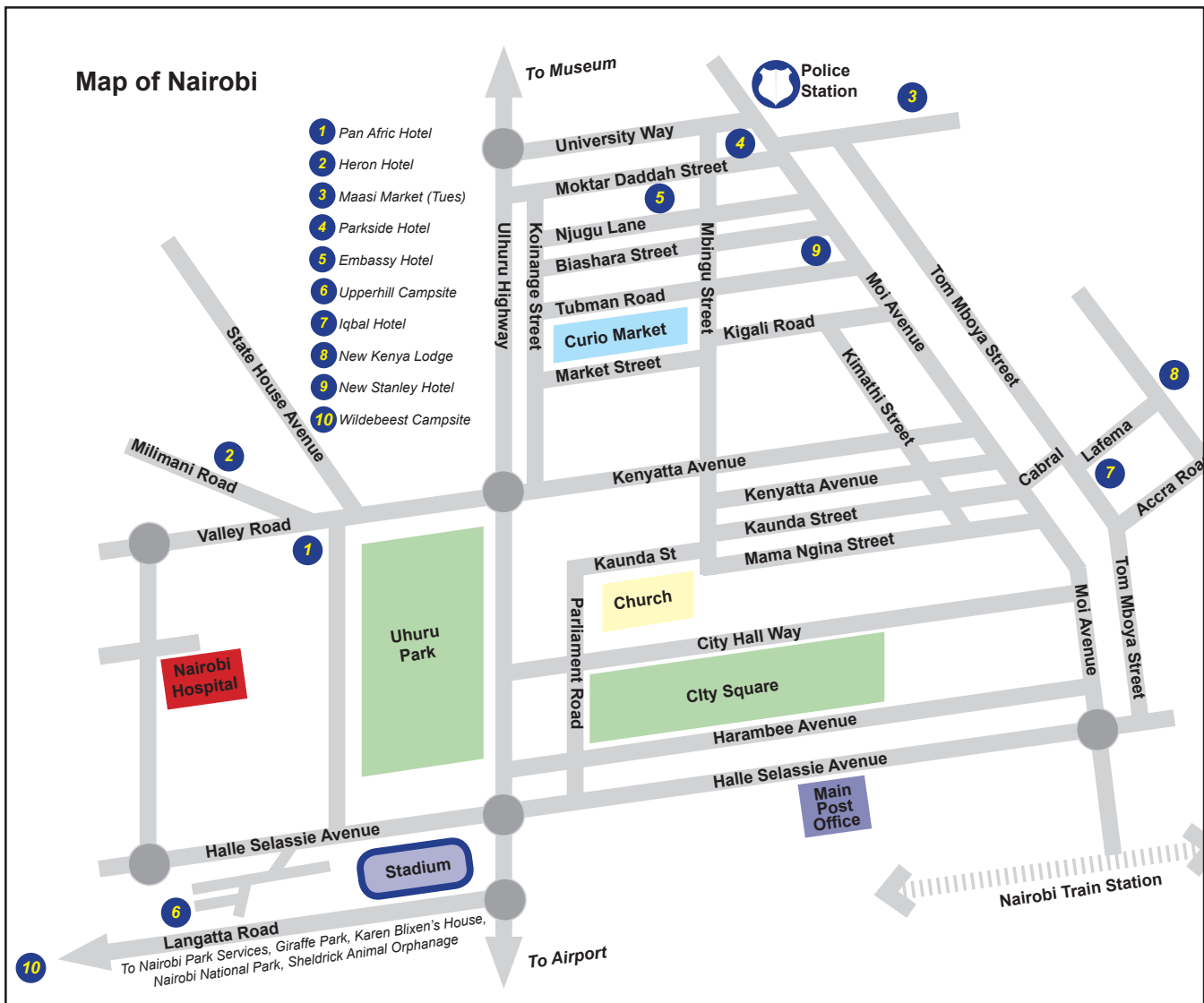
Our first trip visits the Sheldrick's Elephant Orphanage and the Giraffe Park, to see some of the fantastic work being done for animal welfare on conservation in Kenya.

Price: from £49/person

Nairobi National Park

We can arrange a half-day visit to Nairobi National Park, which is the oldest park in Kenya. Lion, gazelle, oryx, zebra, giraffe, buffalo, cheetah and leopard are seen regularly, as well as rhino.

Price: Available upon request



Security in Nairobi

Do be aware that Nairobi is known as 'Nairobbery'. Make sure you stay alert at all times and take sensible precautions. You are best to 'dress down'. Don't wear or carry anything valuable or new including cameras. Mobile phones should be inconspicuous. Do not leave anything of value lying around on display in your room at the hotel. Do not walk on the streets at night.

Important pre-trek details

Forms are provided on which you can complete any extra hotel needs in Nairobi. It is an immense help if these can be sent to the office 10 weeks before you leave for Africa so all your requirements can be finalised.

You can also update us on this form of any change in your details and confirm your insurance details, if you don't know these when booking.

In the event of any last-minute delays or problems there are emergency contact numbers for the Absolute Office on your Booking Voucher for our out of hours service. These can be used in the event of delay e.g. at the airport, or loss of luggage so that we can assist to ensure all runs as smoothly as possible.

Do protect your valuables at all times when travelling in Africa.

Flight departure

Check in as early as possible prior to your departure time: your flight ticket will indicate how early you should check in. When checking in you may need to show your Booking Voucher to explain your travel plans. Please remember to carry this with your personal documents.

Arriving in Africa

At Nairobi airport you will find all signs are in English and Swahili. There is always a bank open for international arrivals.

Arriving in Nairobi you will find a bank to your right after you collect your backpack before you go through Customs.

NB: For rough budgeting/banking purposes, in Kenya the exchange rate is currently USD 1 = 104 Kenyan Shillings (KSH) (October 2019).

Traveling into Nairobi: the airport is situated 15km from the centre of Nairobi. Your airport transfer to the Wildebeest Camp is included in your trekking climb price. There will be someone waiting for you at the airport when you arrive.

Do be aware that anyone offering to assist you with your bags at the airport will expect a tip. You can say no politely. Expected tips for assistance with bags are around 100 KSH. It is wise to have a small amount of change readily available.

Health and immunisation

[Back to Index](#)

Prior to departure it is essential that you contact a specialist travel medical clinic. Clinics such as Nomad Travel Stores and Medical Centre in London will provide the latest recommendations for travel in Africa.

You will need to have the required immunisations and start a course of anti-malarials prior to departure for this trip. Travelling to Africa will expose you to diseases and health hazards that you may not have come across before, such as malaria and waterborne parasites including bilharzia. You must consult a medical professional who specialises in travel medicine before you depart to discuss where you will be travelling in regard to the above, your immunisation schedule and any other requirements. Remember to start your vaccination program in good time, so that it is completed before you go. About six weeks is usually enough, depending on how up to date you currently are.

Nomad Travelers Store and Medical Centre have a live Travel Health Line. Phone: 09068 633414 (calls cost 60 pence per minute).

In Australia and New Zealand, Travellers Medical and Vaccination Centre also have a Health Travel Line. The Travel Health Line is 1902 261 560. There is a per minute charge on this line.

Ensure you are well informed about any health concerns en route so you can stay fit and healthy to relax and enjoy your trip. Lonely Planet publishes a medical travel guide for the region that may be of interest called *Healthy Travel Africa*.

You may also like to check out the following websites:

www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk
www.dh.gov.uk

Suggested travel clinics in the United Kingdom

Nomad Travel Stores and Clinics

Tel: 01341 555 061

- Wellington Terrace, 3 Turnpike Ln, Wood Green, London N8 0PX,
- Beatty House, 1 Admirals Way, Canary Wharf, London E14 9UF, UK
- 11 S Molton St, Mayfair, London W1K 5QP, UK
- 65 London Wall, London, EC2M 5TU
- 52 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0AU

There are also Nomad clinics in Bath, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff and Manchester.

Visit www.nomadtravel.co.uk for further information.

If travelling from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, South Africa or destinations in Asia we recommend you contact Travel Doctor/TMVC. Their websites are at:

www.traveldoctor.com.au/
www.traveldoctor.co.nz
www.traveldoctor.co.za

There are travel clinics in many of the big centres in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, as well as in Thailand, Singapore, Hanoi, Bali and Nadi.

Suggested immunisation requirements (guide only)

Typically the immunisations usually suggested for the countries visited on this trek:

- Yellow fever – Vaccination must not be left any later than 10 days prior to departure and you must be able to show proof i.e. carry your certificate of vaccination
- Typhoid
- Polio
- Tetanus
- Hepatitis A (three months)
- Meningitis
- Diphtheria
- Tuberculosis
- Other Suggested Immunisations – Hepatitis B, rabies.

It is essential to take a course of anti-malarials. It is best to discuss the type of anti-malarial medication you should take with a travel clinic such as Nomad. They will have the latest information on which medication is most effective in the countries through which you will be travelling. They can also advise on possible side effects and which drug might best suit you. Do follow all medical advice given with your prescribed medication. Do be aware that some anti-malarials can have negative side effects and also that your choice of drug needs to be appropriate to protect against strains of malaria specific to the regions in Africa through which you are travelling.

The choices usually suggested are:

Larium, taken x 1 a week
Doxycycline, taken x 1 a day
Malarone, taken x 1 a day

Do think about how to set up a reminder system for yourself so you remember to take your medication. If you are taking a daily medication, as an anti-malarial, do remember also to carry it with you on the plane in your hand luggage.

As well as your anti-malarials, you will need to bring a number of other medical items in a simple Personal Medical Kit. Medical kits can usually be bought at travel clinics. Alternatively lists as to the types of items you are advised to carry can be found in the 'What do I need to bring for my climb?' section.

General information on avoiding malaria

The best way to avoid malaria is to guard against being bitten by mosquitoes and stick strictly to your chosen medication regime. To protect yourself from being bitten:

- Cover exposed skin thoroughly in insect repellent, such as DEET, from dusk to dawn, and reapply it regularly. When applying with sunblock, put it on top of the sunblock.
- Ensure you carry enough DEET with you to Africa. It is not easy to get hold of mosquito repellent once on the road.
- Wear long-sleeved and long-legged lightweight clothing in light colours as well as socks.
- Always sleep under a mosquito net or in a secure tent with all zips zipped up.
- Wear impregnated wrist and ankle bands.
- You may wish to treat clothing with permethrin.

Do be aware also your insurance cover may well assume you are on a recognised course of anti-malarials. If you don't take a recognised anti-malarial, it may affect your cover.

Other medical issues

You are reminded that the incidence of HIV AIDS is very high in the countries through which we travel. Sexual contact and dirty needles are the main ways that the disease is spread. Do take all necessary precautions. Use condoms. If you have to have any kind of injection, do ensure that the needle is unwrapped in front of you.

Please note too that it is wise to know your blood group particularly when travelling in the Third World.

Please ensure you contact a travel health clinic prior to departure for the most recent professional medical advice. The above is given as a broad guide only.

Remember it is a condition of booking that you let us know upon booking or at the earliest opportunity if you have any medical conditions, and particularly if you are on regular medication.

Altitude illnesses

Altitude Mountain Sickness (AMS)

AMS commonly affects people at high altitude who are not accustomed to the high altitude conditions. Around 70% of all climbers who do Mount Kenya will suffer from AMS to some extent during their climb.

AMS is caused by the failure of the body to adapt quickly enough to the reduced level of oxygen in the air at higher altitudes. The most common symptoms of AMS include headaches, light-headedness, nausea, loss of appetite, tingling in your extremities and a mild swelling of the face, ankles and fingers.

High Altitude Pulmonary Oedema (HAPE)

This illness results from the build-up of fluid in the lungs, which prevents proper oxygen exchange. HAPE is a more serious illness if you are on the mountain, and has a number of very clear symptoms. These include breathlessness when resting, very high pulse, and a cracking sound in the chest that leads to coughing-up of fluid. This condition is extremely serious, and if the symptoms are discovered an immediate descent and medical treatment is necessary.

High Altitude Cerebral Oedema (HACE)

HACE is the result of swelling of brain tissue from fluid leakage. HACE is again a serious illness, and has a number of clear symptoms - very severe headaches, severe loss of balance, mental confusion and repeated nausea. If a combination of two or more symptoms are apparent then an immediate descent and medical care are necessary.

Although these warnings may sound rather scary, it is better to be aware of the risk factors involved.

By following proper acclimatization guidelines, or maybe going for a longer trek, your chances of contracting or suffering from altitude sickness do reduce significantly. A few useful tips to help you on your climb:

- Ascend slowly – it takes time to acclimatize, so walk slowly, take regular rests to help your body adjust
- Don't over exert yourself, strenuous activity can bring on altitude sickness symptoms
- Climb high, sleep low – climb up to a higher altitude during the day and then spend the night at a lower altitude. The longer routes comply with this principle, with some extra acclimatization hikes organised in your itinerary
- Drink plenty of water – make sure you take on enough water, and at regular intervals, as well as make sure you eat well

If you do begin to show symptoms of altitude sickness don't go any higher until these symptoms pass, if they increase you are best to descend from the mountain.

Our guides are experienced at spotting the first symptoms of altitude sickness and of dealing with and problems it can cause. It is important that you are open and honest about how you are coping with the climb. If you feel unwell then do say something, don't try to mask your symptoms it will only make things worse in the long run.

The best, and most effective, immediate treatment for serious altitude sickness is to descend from the

mountain.

Choosing the right route

[Back to Index](#)

There are various routes to ascend and descend Mount Kenya. We have two variations available as below:

Our Routes



Naro Moru Route: the classic route, offered over 4 days, and the fastest to Point Lenana. It approaches from the west side of the mountain and is also one of the steepest routes. This trek ascends and descends via the same route.

Sirimon/Chogoria Route: This is a 6 day trek which ascends via the Sirimon route and descends via the Chogoria route which makes the trek very varied. These are two of the most scenic routes on the mountain. The Sirimon approaches from the west and is the longest route, although the most gentle. It is noted for its fantastic glacial scenery. Descent is on the east of the mountain on the Chogoria Route - again, not the fastest route but is favoured for its stunning scenery, including waterfalls, gorges and tarns.

Weather

In many ways the weather can help to dictate when is the best time for you to be climbing Mount Kenya. The rainy seasons can certainly have an impact on the conditions on the mountain. The main rainy seasons in East Africa are the 'Long Rains' from early-mid March through to the end of May, and sometimes into early June. The 'Short Rains' are from early November until late December. Whilst you can trek at any time of the year, the rainy seasons can make conditions on the mountain treacherous and not as safe as at other times of the year.

Prior to the long rains from January through to when the rains start can be some of the most superb conditions on the mountain with reasonable temperatures. Conditions from mid July to mid October are also usually good and clear, with low rainfall. In general the best times to climb Mount Kenya are during the warmer and drier months, where you are more likely to experience clear, dry weather, which can last for weeks on end. However, do note though that even during the 'dry' seasons, you may still experience some heavy rain, as the weather on the mountain is unpredictable.

Temperatures on the mountain can vary considerably depending on the stage of climb you are up to. The day and night temperatures can also vary dramatically. Daytime temperatures typically range from 5 - 15°C and from 3,000 metres frost may be encountered at night. At the summit, the nighttime temperatures can reach well below freezing point, even as low as -20°C.

Money and budgeting

[Back to Index](#)

When costing a Mount Kenya climb the areas you need to consider are:

Before you go remember you need to cover...

1. The price for your climb
2. Your airfare
3. Immunisation and anti-malarials
4. Insurance
5. Equipment

Step off the plane in Africa with...

6. Spending money – this is very individual and will mainly depend on what you spend before and after your climb on meals, drinks and other personal needs eg. internet. A suggested budget would be from £60.
7. Equipment hire
8. Tips
9. Visas:

British	50 USD
N.Z.	50 USD
Australian	50 USD
South African	Nil
American	50 USD

Purchasing visas in Africa in US dollars for the above passports is currently cheaper than buying ahead of time.

10. Any extra pre and post trek costs

Please note: You need to carry money with you out to Africa to cover Items 6 to 10 (i.e. for your spending money, equipment hire, visas, tips and pre and post climb costs). The figures above are conservative estimates for average spending per person on a climb. Do note there will be some variation person to person as to what clients spend. Figures quoted are based on regular information we receive from operators, passengers and crew in the past 12 months.

We would recommend that you climb off the plane with around £300 to cover the above, preferably in USD cash. You will want to have more if you are going to be staying for any extra nights or hiring any equipment. Remember that your visa will need to be paid in USD cash.

How do I take this money to Africa?

We strongly recommend that you organise the money you want to take to Africa before you leave for your trip.

USD cash

You will probably find it most convenient to bring your traveling funds in USD cash. We would recommend you should have at least 380 USD when you climb off the plane.

When arranging your cash remember small denominations can be useful but the larger denominations will give a better exchange rate. You should also request that your notes are not torn, written on or damaged in any way.

Please note that in general USD notes need to be post 2004 US dollar notes and in good condition. Remember you will need 50 USD for your Kenyan visa when you land at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi unless traveling on a South African passport.

A friendly reminder: Cash is carried at your own discretion. Do keep a close eye on your valuables.

ATM access

You can access ATMs in Nairobi and use a credit card. There are ATMs situated at the Galleria Mall approximately 2km from Wildebeest camp. Do be aware where ATM access is available you can only draw local currency which cannot be used for all your costs. Be aware too that often whilst there may be ATMs in town, they also cannot be guaranteed to be in working order!

Please note as well MasterCard and Maestro particularly seem to be of little or no use, Visa cards only usually being accepted the times you can use cards.

Pounds sterling cash

Assuming ATMs are not able to be accessed, to give you some extra protection against loss and theft as well as back up if you do have problems with your card, we do recommend that you carry some Sterling cash if travelling from the UK. This can be useful to buy local currency when you can get to a bank or regular forex bureau. If you are not in sterling consider carrying more USD cash. If travelling from the UK carry £50 as back up.

Other things to note in regards to organising your money for Africa

For your information the currencies you will meet are:

Kenya Kenyan shillings.

Tips

Tips are a customary way to end your trip, and a good way of showing your appreciation for the job that your guides, porters and cook have done while you are on the mountain. This is certainly something that you should budget for when considering a climb, as a tip is an expected element of the trek for good service. How much you tip is totally dependent upon you and how much you feel is justified for your crew and for the work that they have put in. As a rough guideline, you should budget around US\$190 – US\$300 per person for tips for your climb across your trekking team.

Hire equipment

If possible, it is best to bring your own equipment for your Mount Kenya climb. The most important items to bring are a pair of comfortable and preferably waterproof walking boots. A waterproof jacket is essential and layering clothing is recommended and is helpful if you are continuing your travels after your trek, too. You will also need a warm sleeping bag.

For those that are unable to bring all the necessary items, especially gear that can cope with the extremes in temperatures and conditions that you will experience on the mountain, it is possible to hire some items from shops locally. Please let us know at the earliest if you think there may be items that you will need to hire.

What do I need to bring?

[Back to Index](#)

The following list details essentials as well as non-essentials. It is a guide only. If you are unsure about specific items please feel free to ring us.

You need to bring:

- Travel documents including passport and air tickets
- Booking Voucher with Final Receipt – essential for immigration purposes
- Vaccination documentation, particularly for yellow fever shot
- Insurance policy
- US\$ cash for your visa and spending money
- Credit card – preferably Visa

Essential camping equipment

- Sleeping bag, 4 seasons, and sheet.
- Torch and batteries, a head torch being the most useful.
Remember to bring spare batteries and an extra bulb.

- Ski-pole/walking stick
- Mosquito repellent (DEET)
- Insect repellent spray
- Sunblock cream
- Lip salve/Chap Stick
- Padlock
- Small personal medical kit including: anti-malarials, vitamin tablets, paracetamol, antibiotic powder, Band-Aids, Blister pads, cotton wool, sterile gloves, flu medication for coughs, colds and sinuses, rehydration salts, rubs for sore muscles, sports injury cream for sprains, an antihistamine, immodium, treatment for tummy bugs, stings/bites and sunburn and eye drops. If you wear contact lenses you are advised to carry disposables.
- You should also consider a treatment for altitude sickness

Other items

- Pocket knife
- 1 litre water container. Make sure it screws tight. A thermal water flask can be useful.
- Sunglasses (good quality with 100% UV protection)
- Ziploc bags for wet items, rubbish and to keep items dust free.
- Towel
- Antibacterial soap
- Condoms
- Tissues
- A means of securing your hair back is useful such as a bandana, a scarf, beanies, hair ties and clips
- Cigarette lighter
- Emergency sewing kit
- Tweezers, nail scissors, nail brush
- Energy snacks and sweets

In regards to toiletries, these are available to buy in Africa including shampoo, soap, toilet paper and tampons. Please note though that they can be quite expensive and it can be time-consuming sourcing particular items so carry what you need if possible.

Ensure you bring any medications you might require with you with the script.

The two most common gynaecological problems that may occur whilst travelling in Africa are thrush and urinary tract infections. If you know you are prone to either of these it may pay to seek advice from your doctor and bring the necessary treatments. Loose fitting, cotton underwear and clothes are always wise.

Extra tips:

Any containers sealed at low levels (sun cream, contact lens solution, toothpaste etc) will tend to expand as you climb higher and external air pressure decreases. Carefully release the build up of pressure each night as you go higher so that they don't burst in your pack.

Remember to cut your toenails well before departure particularly to avoid discomfort on your descent.

To keep your batteries warm keep them with you in your sleeping bag at night including your headlamp batteries. Keep your spare battery near your skin on summit day but in a ziploc bag to prevent condensation.

Electrical items

- iPod/iPhone/MP3/Music player if you want to listen to your own music
- Please note it is also possible to use your iPod/iPhone as a hard drive to store photos - check the memory before traveling to ensure you have adequate space to store all the photos you may wish to take
- Camera in a protective case and spare memory card(s)/film
- Camera cleaning kit
- For SLR cameras we recommend a telephoto of 120 mm (or similar) or an 80-200 mm zoom
- 2 camera batteries
- Polarising filter/lens hood for SLRs
- USB cable - to connect to internet cafes or for downloading
- Mobile phone

- * Remember if you set up international roaming the charges will be very high, even to receive calls
- * Sim cards can be purchased cheaply out in Kenya
- * Remember you will need to have your phone unlocked prior to arriving in Africa so that other sim cards can be used with it
- * Check you know how to program it to work as an alarm clock.

Clothes

The clothes that you take for your trek will certainly contribute to your enjoyment and comfort on the mountain. Temperatures can range from +30 degrees in the rainforest, to -25 degrees at the summit and you can walk through 5 different climate zones in as many days. Ensuring you are appropriately dressed is essential for your well being and can impact on your ability to reach the summit.

Do carefully consider how to pack sensibly and efficiently to ensure you have all the clothing required to cope with the extreme temperatures and conditions you will face during your trek

Where to start?

Think layers! Take lightweight thinner layers to keep cool, warm, dry and comfortable on the mountain, as opposed to thick, heavy layers so you are able to more easily adjust your clothing as required.

As a guide, one or two sets of clothes for daytime, and a clean set for night, plus thermals, should be sufficient. As all supplies must be carried by the porters, please don't bring more personal belongings than you need and please keep your backpack limit to 15 kilograms for the climb. Any excess luggage can be stored for free back at Wildebeest Camp.

The 3 main layers to consider are:

1. Base layer - A thermal layer to provide comfort by keeping the skin dry.

The base layer is a close fitting layer next to the skin that will help to keep you warm and draw sweat away from the skin. This will make you feel warmer and keep you more comfortable on the move. Synthetic materials such as polyester and microfiber-based fabrics are ideal as they do not absorb moisture but transfer it well. Bamboo-made base layers are also an excellent choice but they can be expensive.

Cotton is a cheap option and will feel comfortable when dry, but will absorb moisture easily and moisture against the skin will only lower your body temperature. Cotton will be slow to dry out too, especially in cold conditions.

2. Mid layer - provides further warmth and insulation for the colder temperatures. The mid layer should be loose-fitting enough to allow insulating air between the layers. For extreme temperatures, multiple thin mid layers can be worn rather than one thicker layer.

Wool is the traditional mid layer material as it provides good insulation even when wet. A fleece or other synthetics have similar properties to wool, but are lighter and a very good option. It provides good insulation even when wet, absorbs very little moisture and dries quickly.

Down has a very good warmth-weight ratio and can be packed down to take up very little room. The downsides are that it is more expensive and loses its insulating properties when wet or compressed.

Synthetic Fiberfill such as polyester fiber is used similarly to down, but does not have as good a warmth-weight ratio. However, it is less expensive and provides good insulation even when wet.

3. Shell layer - the outermost clothing layer to protect you from wind and rain. The shell layer should also be breathable, allowing moisture to pass through to the outside, while keeping the elements out. Plastic raincoats will protect from the wind and rain, but are not breathable. To compensate, these types of raincoats will have flap-covered holes and are very loose-fitting to allow air circulation.

Hard shell materials are waterproof and are breathable. Their essential element is a thin, porous membrane that blocks liquid from entering the garment, but will allow water vapor (evaporated sweat) through the material. Typically, the more expensive the material, the more breathable it will be. The known brands of this type of material are Gore-Tex, Jeantex and Ventex to protect climbers.

A water resistant (soft shell) material will only partially block water, but they are usually more breathable, comfortable and cheaper than completely waterproof materials.

Suggested Clothing List

Technical Clothing

1 - Waterproof Jacket, breathable with hood

1 - Insulated Jacket, synthetic or down, depending on season

1 - Soft Jacket, fleece or soft-shell

2 - Long Sleeve Shirt, light-weight, moisture-wicking fabric

1 - Short Sleeve Shirt, light-weight, moisture-wicking fabric

1 - Waterproof Trousers, breathable (side-zipper recommended)

2 - Hiking Pants/Fleece pants

1 - Shorts that are comfortable to hike in. Convertible trousers are practical

1 - Long Underwear eg propylene leggings or similar for base layer (moisture-wicking fabric thermal underwear recommended)

3 - Underwear, briefs (moisture-wicking fabric thermal underwear recommended)

1-2 - Sports Bra (women)

Headwear

1 - Brimmed Hat, for sun protection

1 - Knit Hat, for warmth

1 - Balaclava, for face coverage (optional)

Handwear - double layer gloves or mittens

1 - Gloves, warm (waterproof recommended)

1 - Glove Liners, thin, synthetic, worn under gloves for added warmth (optional)

Footwear

1 - Hiking Boots, warm, waterproof, broken-in

1 - Spare laces

1 - Trainers / Tent mules, to wear in camp (optional)

5 - 6 - Socks, a few pairs of thick thermal pairs as well as a few normal pairs, wool or synthetic

3 - Sock Liners, tight, thin, synthetic, worn under socks to prevent blisters (optional)

1 - Gaiters, waterproof (optional)

Shorts and t-shirts are useful for trekking on the lower slopes where temperatures are likely to be higher than further up the mountain.

Additional information for your Mount Kenya climb

[Back to Index](#)

Who can climb Mount Kenya?

There really is no upper age limit for climbers wanting to do Mount Kenya. We would advise older climbers to have a few extra health checks before deciding to do the climb, just to make sure that you will be safe to do so, but really virtually any age is welcome to come and try to reach the top of Kenya's highest peak. Similarly, both men and women can do this climb with little or no problems.

Preparing for your climb

You do need to be physically prepared for your climb; it is a strenuous hike. The toughest element though is the extreme altitude.

Any exercise you do before you go will help, but especially walking. Try doing a few hours a day if you can, regular gym sessions as well as some running, cycling or swimming may help you reach the level of fitness that will give you the best chance of making a successful assault on the summit.

Mental stamina and preparation are also vitally important for your climb. Your mental stamina will, without doubt, make the really difficult sections easier to complete. If you are properly equipped and physically prepared you can be mentally confident that you will physically cope with your ascent of Mount Kenya.

Climbs and safaris

If you are interested in really making the most out of your trip to Africa and also want to go on a safari before or after your climb, then this is certainly possible. Indeed, a significant number of our climbers also combine their Mount Kenya climb with a safari.

Please contact us if you are interested in combining your trek with one of our many safaris. This works particularly well with safaris out of Nairobi but equally flights can also be bolted on to Kigali, Entebbe and also onto the Kenyan coast or to Zanzibar.

Reading list

[Back to Index](#)

For those of you who want to read before you go, here are a few suggested titles:

No Picnic on Mount Kenya	Felice Benuzzi
Facing Mount Kenya	Jomo Kenyatta
A Change in Altitude	Anita Shreve
Altitude Illness: Prevention and Treatment	Steven Bezruchka
Making the Climb	John C. Bowling
The Weather in Africa	Martha Gellhorn

Lonely Planets, Bradts and Rough Guides are always a mine of information.

A 746 Michelin map will give you a good insight into where you are travelling.

A friendly note that conditions, price and details change constantly in Africa and what may be appropriate and/or correct one day is not necessarily the case the next. Much time and effort goes into keeping this information as up to date as possible. At the same time do not treat this document as 'the bible' for your climb. It is a guide only to assist in steering you in the right direction.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are more than happy to assist.

Queries about your safari booking should be directed to Absolute Africa. We are available on Skype and Live Chat, or feel free to email us at our bookings office at bookings@absoluteafrica.com

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