



Climb Kilimanjaro

Pre-climb Information

Thank you for booking your climb via Fair Voyage with a tour operator committed to fair porter treatment practices as independently monitored by the Kilimanjaro Porters Assistance Project (KPAP).

In this general Pre-Climb Information Pack provided by Fair Voyage, you will find essential information to help you prepare your trip to Tanzania and your Kilimanjaro climb. In addition, your tour operator may provide you with their own information pack. Please consult your specific tour offer for details about your tour inclusions and exclusions.

Please read all information carefully and ask us any questions you might have during your preparation process.

TRAVELLING TO TANZANIA

LANGUAGE: Kiswahili is the national language of Tanzania. However, English is the official business language. Travellers can get by very well using English which is commonly spoken in all areas typically visited by tourists.

VISA: Most visitors require a visa to enter Tanzania. This can be purchased in cash (US dollars) upon arrival at Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar or Dar es Salaam International airports and at the Namanga border crossing with Kenya. The visa fee currently is US\$50 for most nationalities and US\$100 for US citizens.

YELLOW FEVER: The government of Tanzania requires proof of yellow fever vaccination upon arrival if you are traveling from a country with risk of yellow fever, including Kenya. Please find a list of countries [here](#).

HEALTH: In addition to routine (travel) vaccinations, additional vaccines and medications are (highly) recommended when travelling to Tanzania. In particular, please note that the type of Malaria virus in Tanzania can be lethal. We therefore

highly recommend Malaria prophylaxis. Please find a list of vaccines and medications diseases [here](#), and consult with your medical expert well ahead of your trip as certain vaccines and medicines need to be administered over longer time periods to become effective.

MONEY: Even when you have booked an all-inclusive package tour, there is still a need to bring money for visas, gratuities, souvenirs, drinks, snacks, laundry, meals not covered by your itinerary and other expenses. The Tanzanian Shilling is Tanzania's currency, though US dollars are also widely excepted (make sure to bring smaller notes). ATMs are available in major cities (including Arusha, Moshi, and Zanzibar). Credit cards are only accepted at larger hotels, stores and restaurants, and may involve high surcharges.

COMMUNICATIONS: The dialing code for Tanzania is +255. Mobile network coverage is widely available. It is even expanding in the parks, though limited in many areas and should not be relied upon. Vodacom, Airtel, and Tigo are the best networks. Internet cafes and hotel internet access is available in most cities. Most safari lodges and camps do not have public internet connections. Even if there is an internet connection, it is often slow. If you require, you can purchase a local SIM card with data fairly inexpensively in major cities. For registration, you will need to ring your passport copy.

CLIMATE: Tanzania mostly enjoys a tropical climate with fairly pleasant temperatures all year round of between mid 20° to low 30° Celsius during the day. The hottest months are from October to February. The coolest months are June to August when nights and early mornings can be cold.

TIPPING: The Tanzania tourism industry generally follows North American tipping practices. Tourists are expected to tip at restaurants and hotels, their safari guide and driver, as well as their mountain crew when climbing Kilimanjaro. Your tour operator will usually provide you with tipping recommendations.

ELECTRICITY: In Tanzania the standard voltage is 230 V. You can use your electric appliances in Tanzania if the standard voltage in your country is between 220-240 V (as is in Europe and Australia). If the standard voltage in your country is in the range of 100-127 V (as is in the US and Canada), you need a voltage converter. The power outlets are UK-style (three prongs—two flat and one rectangular).

LOST LUGGAGE: Please note that checked in luggage may at times get misplaced and not arrive with you at the airport. Your tour operator will usually be able to arrange for transporting of delayed luggage to you, but will charge for this additional service. In order to make sure that such unfortunate event does not impact your trip, we highly recommend that you keep all essential items with you in your carry on

luggage. Wearing essential items of clothing and your hiking boots (if applicable) during your flight will help reduce your carry on luggage.

VALUABLES: Please keep valuables with you during your travels, and do not place them in your checked luggage. Upon arrival, you may also store them in a safe with the front desk of your hotel. It's best to secure all bags that you do not carry with you with a padlock in order to prevent theft. This includes your checked luggage during your flights, any bags you leave at your hotel as well as any bags that you leave with your driver, guide or porters. We regret that we are unable to accept any liability for any items lost or stolen.

CLOTHING: Due to the warm and humid weather throughout most of the country, it is best to bring light comfortable clothing, with a warmer layer for evenings. Long sleeves and trousers are best for dusk to protect against mosquito bites. During the day you will need a hat, sunglasses and high factor sun cream. Modest dress is advisable for both men and women, particularly in coastal areas.

CLIMBING KILIMANJARO

ARRIVAL: Kilimanjaro International Airport is a small airport. If you have arranged airport transfer with your tour operator, your driver will be waiting for you outside, upon exit from the baggage hall. Watch out for a sign with your name or the name of your tour operator.

PRE-CLIMB BRIEFING: Tour operators usually arrange a pre-climb briefing for you at your hotel in afternoon before your climb. The exact time of the briefing will be advised by your tour operator. At the briefing, you will usually meet your head guide who will conduct a gear check, advise you how to stay safe and other important rules, and inform you about your start time for the next morning.

MAIN BAG: Your main bag on the mountain will be carried by a porter. To protect porters, there is a weight limit. The official weight limit by the Kilimanjaro National Park is 20kg per porter, whereby the weight would typically reduce over time as food supplies get consumed. Some tour operators allow you to bring up to 20kg, while most restrict your weight to 15kg, sometimes less. So please check the exact weight allowance of your tour operator. Your bag should be a soft holdall, duffel bag or rucksack as many of the porters carry the bags on their heads. Some tour operators have more specific requirements. Hard bags and suitcases are not suitable for Kilimanjaro and typically not allowed.

Additional luggage that you do not need on the mountain can usually be left at your hotel, whereby you should store any valuables in a safe with the front desk.

DAYPACK: In addition to your main bag, you will need to bring a daypack for you to carry during the hike each day, as you will not have access to your main bag until you reach the next camp. In your daypack, you should bring everything that you may need while hiking: 2-3 liters of water, rain gear, sunblock and sunglasses, camera, lunch or snacks, extra layers, wet wipes, hand sanitizer, passport and money. A good daypack should have a hip belt for equal weight distribution, and good back and shoulder support.

HEALTH AND SAFETY: Climbing Kilimanjaro is a strenuous and potentially hazardous activity, including risks associated with high altitude. Your head guide's primary responsibility is to ensure that you are safe and healthy during your trek. It is important that you inform your head guide if you are unwell, and that you are always honest with your head guide about your physical condition. You must follow his instructions, especially when instructed to descend as it will only ever be in the interests of your health and safety. Always remember—summitting is optional, coming back down safely is mandatory. When you need to descend early, please note that you will be responsible for any additional expenses, such as unplanned hotel accommodation, though you may be able to reclaim them on your travel insurance.

MEDICAL AND TRAVEL INSURANCE: As with all overseas travels, it is essential that you have adequate insurance, which should cover personal accident, medical expenses, loss of effects, repatriation costs and all other expenses that might arise as a result of loss, damage, injury or delay. Please read the fine print to make sure that your insurance covers your Kilimanjaro climb. It is also advisable that you take out a travel cancellation insurance as soon as you have confirmed your booking, to cover your non-refundable costs in case of cancellation or changes to your Tour. For emergencies, you should keep a copy of your insurance details with you at all times.

MOUNTAIN WEATHER: Temperatures on Mount Kilimanjaro are about as extreme as you could get in a week. You will start walking in temperatures of up to 30 degrees Celsius at the base of the mountain, to as low as minus 20 degrees Celsius at the summit.

Generally speaking, early mornings will warm up as soon as the sun rises and the days will be warm and bright. You will need strong UV protection. As soon as the sun sets, however, the temperature drops radically, often to below zero degrees. Nights are usually clear and frosty, so make sure to bring warm clothes and a sleeping bag rated for freezing temperatures (or rent such a sleeping bag from your tour operator).

Like all mountains, the weather is somewhat unpredictable. It's best to avoid the rainy seasons from November to December and mid-March to May. Even during the dry season, however, it may rain occasionally, especially during your first and last climbing day when you are in the rainforest. Therefore, you should carry rain gear with you in your daypack from the very first day.

MEALS: You will usually receive three meals every day on the mountain. Breakfast is usually hot (e.g. porridge, eggs, toast, tea or coffee). Lunch can be packed or hot, depending on your tour offer and itinerary. Some tour operators provide hot lunches whenever possible (depending on where you are at the mountain), while others provide mostly packed lunches. You will always be provided with a filling hot meal in the evening (e.g. soup followed by rice, potato or pasta with a hearty sauce), whereby nutritious variety and inclusion of protein and fresh vegetables depends on your package. Some tour operators also provide snacks. In any case, we recommend that you also bring a sufficient supply of your own snacks or comfort food, such as energy bars or nuts.

DRINKING WATER: Your mountain crew will provide you with ample drinking water at camp, collected by your porters each morning and evening from local water sources for drinking and cooking. Different tour operators use different methods to treat your water for drinking (boiling, filters or chemical treatment), whereby all drinking water provided to you by our Kilimanjaro tour operator partners is safe to consume. You will need enough water bottles or hydration systems (preferably a combination thereof) to be able to carry ca. 3 litres of water during the day. Please note that plastic bottles are not allowed in the park. Nalgene bottles are a great light-weight and reusable alternative.

CAMPSITES: Your porters will set up camp for you each day before you arrive at the campsite. Your campsite will consist of sleeping tents, a kitchen tent, and staff tents. Most tour operators also provide a mess tent for dining, including tables and chairs.

HYGIENE: Toilet facilities provided by the park vary from camp to camp. Some are fairly modern with running flush and tap water, though it's best to not count on them. At most camps, especially higher up, there are only long drop toilets. It has therefore become more and more common that tour operators provide a private toilet tent at camp, either as part of their standard package or for an additional cost. Tour operators may provide you with a bucket of hot water to wash in the morning and a hand wash station at camp. Either case, we recommend you to bring wet wipes, toilet roll and antibacterial hand sanitizer which are usually sufficient to remain hygienic. For your hair, baby powder can work miracles to degrease and neutralize odor.

MOUNTAIN CREW: Other than your head guide, your mountain crew consists of your assistant guide(s) (depending on total number of climbers in your group), a cook and porters. Some porters also act as waiters, water carriers, or toilet cleaners. Depending on the size of your group and extent of equipment provided, there are usually at least 3-5 porters per climber. Most tour operators follow the guidelines to have at least one (assistant) guide for every two climbers. Altogether, this means that small groups of two climbers may easily have a staff size of 12-15.

TIPPING RECOMMENDATION: Tipping is customary on Kilimanjaro and expected by your mountain crew for their work. Even though they receive a salary, they rely on tips for a fair total compensation. Each tour operator has their own tipping guidelines, taking into consideration their base salaries, in order to match the total compensation target per crew member agreed amongst the KPAP Partners for Responsible Travel. Tipping practices further vary from tour operator to tour operator. It is usually done after you summit, on your last day on the mountain, in cash. Some tour operators will ask you to hand the tip to each crew member individually, while others have a name list for you to enter your allocated tips for each crew member, and yet others will make the allocation to each crew member for you based on your total tip. Please check the specific tipping guidelines provided by your tour operator. Total tipping recommendations are usually in the range of US\$250 to US\$500 per climber.

ALTITUDE SICKNESS AND KILIMANJARO

WHAT IS ALTITUDE SICKNESS? Altitude sickness or acute mountain sickness (AMS) refer to the side effects caused by exposure to high altitudes. As you reach higher altitudes, the air contains less oxygen which begins to negatively affect the human body. Symptoms usually develop from around 2,500 meters of altitude. First signs of altitude sickness or acute mountain sickness (AMS) include headache, nausea or shortness of breath. More severe symptoms include dry cough, fever, vomiting or retinal hemorrhage. Extreme cases can include fluid build up in the brain characterized by loss of coordination, confusion, inability to walk and even coma.

HOW DANGEROUS IS AMS? Most symptoms of AMS are temporary and not dangerous. However, if left untreated (immediate descent being the most effective treatment), AMS can be lethal. It is estimated that more than 10 tourists die on Kilimanjaro every year, and AMS is the predominant cause. However, these are extreme cases and mostly avoidable.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT? Kilimanjaro climbers will typically experience shortness of breath even at a relatively slow walking pace, especially at higher altitudes. Other

common symptoms of altitude sickness while climbing Kilimanjaro include headaches, nausea and dizziness. Loss of appetite and insomnia are also common. You do not need to be overly concerned if you experience any of the above symptoms, and it is usually safe for you to continue your ascend.

However, when symptoms become more severe, immediate descent assisted by your guide is imperative. You must also seek emergency treatment in a hospital, even if you feel better after descent, to avoid more serious and lasting consequences. It is not safe for you to continue your onward journey or board a flight home without a thorough medical check.

HOW CAN I AVOID AMS? You will not be able to avoid AMS entirely. Even climbers who acclimatize well will experience at least shortness of breath and some other mild symptoms. However, the so-called “3 golden rules of altitude acclimatization” will help you acclimatize naturally in order to reduce the discomforts and risks associated with altitude sickness. The golden rules are:

1) Take your time: It is important to acclimatize slowly. Therefore, take as long as possible to hike between camps to help with acclimatization. Walk slowly, even if you have energy to walk faster. It is typically the climbers who are in excellent physical condition and push hard who later have trouble acclimatizing. Follow your guide’s pace and reduce your walking speed to “pole, pole” (slowly, slowly). Climbing Kilimanjaro is not a speed competition. The slower you walk, the more likely you will reach the summit.

2) Stay hydrated: Drink at least 2-3 liters of water every day, or more if in combination with dehydrating substances such as diamox or caffeine. Try to drink as much as you can in the especially in the morning and during the day (rather than in the evening, in order to avoid getting up multiple times at night to urinate).

3) Walk hike, sleep low: The third rule recommends to sleep at a lower altitude at night than you've climbed to during the day. Not all routes have such a beneficial altitude profile. However, you may have the option to go on an acclimatization hike in the afternoon. If your tour permits and your guide advises, make use of this option.

SHOULD I TAKE DIAMOX? Diamox is a drug which reduces the symptoms of altitude sickness. It has therefore become popular amongst Kilimanjaro climbers and is recommended by many tour operators. However, it also has side effects. Amongst the most common ones, it is dehydrating. This means that you will need to drink even more and that you need to urinate more frequently. Climbers taking Diamox therefore usually need to get up at least once during the night, which interrupts your

sleep. Consequences of poor sleep might work against any benefits gained from Diamox, especially for longer climbs. We believe that acclimatizing naturally by taking your time over multiple days is still the best way to summit Kilimanjaro safely. Objective statistics are currently not yet available to support a clear recommendation for or against Diamox.