

The Starfish Malawi Kilimanjaro Challenge: Itinerary

Day 1: Depart London Heathrow on a connecting flight to Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

Day 2: Upon arrival into Tanzania, transfer to an idyllic lodge hotel in Arusha. A comprehensive final briefing meeting will follow that afternoon with the expedition leader. This will serve as your opportunity to learn more about the days ahead, and for you to ask any questions – including about kit and equipment. The remainder of the day is free to rest, relax and look forward to the adventure ahead.

Day 3 (Trek Day 1: 3-4 hours walking / 4 miles / 1,950 → 2,600m): An early start to the day as you depart on a 4-hour drive to the Rongai starting point. After registration, you will be introduced to your guides and porters who will remain with you for the duration of the trek. The trek begins from the attractive wooden village of Nale Moru on a small path that winds through fields of maize and potatoes before entering pine forest. The track then starts to climb consistently, but gently through attractive forest that shelters a variety of wildlife. The forest begins to thin out and the first camp is at the edge of the moorland zone with extensive views over the Kenyan plains.

Day 4 (Trek Day 2: 6-7 hours walking / 5.6 miles / 2,600 → 3,600m): A morning walk up to the 'Second Cave' (3,450m). The walk is steadily uphill with superb views of Kibo and the Eastern icefields on the crater rim. The afternoon route leaves the main trail and heads out across moorland on a smaller path towards the jagged peaks of Mawenzi. The campsite is in a sheltered valley near Kikelewa Caves.

Day 5 (Trek Day 3: 3-4 hours walking / 3.7 miles / 3,600 → 4,330m): A short but steep climb up grassy slopes is rewarded by superb views and a tangible sense of wilderness. Vegetation is left behind shortly before reaching the next camp at Mawenzi Tarn, spectacularly situated directly beneath the towering spires of Mawenzi. The afternoon will be free to rest or explore the surrounding area as an aid to acclimatisation.

Day 6 (Trek Day 4: 5 hours walking / 5.6 miles / 4,330 → 4,700m): You will cross the seemingly never-ending lunar desert of the 'Saddle' between Mawenzi Peak and Kibo campsite, which lies at the foot of the Kibo crater wall. The open landscape affords stunning all-round views and, as you approach Kibo, you will begin to be able to make out the winding summit path that you will take the following day. The remainder of the day is spent resting in preparation for the final ascent.

Day 7 (Trek Day 5: 10-15 hours walking / 3.1 + 9.3 miles / 4,700 → 5,895 → 3,720m): The final and most demanding part of the climb takes place by torchlight departing at 12am on a switchback trail through loose volcanic scree to the crater rim at Gillman's Point (5,685m). There is a short rest to enjoy the spectacular sunrise over Mawenzi, followed by a three-hour round trip to Uhuru Peak, passing close to the spectacular glaciers and ice cliffs that still occupy most of the summit area. The descent to Kibo is surprisingly fast and, after a chance to rest, the descent continues to the final campsite at Horombo.

Day 8 (Trek Day 6: 5-6 hours walking / 12.5 miles / 3,720 → 1,650m): A steady descent through moorland to Mandara Hut (2,700m), which is the first stopping place for those on the Marangu route. The descent continues through lush forest on a path to the National Park gate at Marangu, at which point the trek is complete. You will transfer back to hotel in Marangu where the rest of the day is spent resting, recuperating and celebrating.

Day 9: A leisurely start to the day prior to an evening transfer to Kilimanjaro Airport by car to catch the overnight and connecting return flight to London Heathrow. For those who wish, the return home can be delayed in order to travel onto destinations such as Zanzibar or a safari. Such extensions can be arranged upon request and at your own personal cost.

Day 10: Arrive back into London Heathrow.

Total Cost: £2,295

This includes international flights from and to London Heathrow, transfers and travel, accommodation, meals, Kilimanjaro National Park entrance fees, and fully supported expedition costs. It does not include transport to and from London Heathrow, personal clothing and equipment, visa processing fees, travel insurance, vaccines and medication, or personal expenses – including drinks.