

## **Rongai Route**

The Rongai Route is an attractive option for members seeking a scenic and relatively less traveled route to Kilimanjaro's summit. Ascending from the north-eastern slope of the mountain, our route takes us along the border between Tanzania and Kenya. The landscape is wide and magnificent with views stretching far across the region. The Rongai Route features a dense rainforest with abundant wildlife - Colobus monkeys and rare bird species can typically be observed on the first day on the route. The ascent up the northern slope is long and peaceful, leading us to the foot of Mawenzi. This is a particularly beautiful point along the route where we have an opportunity to further explore the landscape and climb the ridgelines above us. Summit day highlights beautiful views of the crater landscape and surrounding glaciers as the trail circumvents a section of Kilimanjaro's eastern ridge. The sunrises from the route are consistently glorious – members can enjoy the solitude and wonder of the early sun slowly escaping the horizon as they approach the summit from Stella Point.

Depending on conditions and progress, well acclimatized members are welcome to join one of our guides on a descent to the crater rim to explore the landscape and surrounding glaciers. Fit trekkers may even spend the night in the crater for some once in a lifetime star-gazing. This is a very cool experience. Please see our detailed daily itinerary for more information.

## **Level of Difficulty**

Mt. Kilimanjaro is commonly referred to as a “trekking peak” in the climbing community, and the Rongai Route requires no previous experience or technical skill to complete successfully. Although no prior experience is required and Kilimanjaro has a high number of summiteers each year, those with good cardiovascular fitness have the highest rate of success. The Rongai Route is a moderate, low-angle trail with no permanent snow fields. The route covers approximately 41 miles over eight days. The most significant objective hazard is altitude.

We assist members in developing familiarity with their fitness, tolerance to altitude and acclimatization for safety and success. Please review our detailed daily itinerary with an emphasis on daily altitude advances. We regularly consult with members on their goals, so please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions, comments or concerns.

## **Preparation**

Our first goal is your safety and success. Our second goal is to be the very best guide service on Mt. Kilimanjaro. To that end, S2Kilimanjaro is redefining traditional guiding

standards to prepare you for the summit well in advance of your departure. Following fundamental planning principles, we believe preparation is imperative to successful execution. You'll have the opportunity to consult and work with our guides before your departure.

At the leading edge of safety and success, S2Kilimanjaro has an impressive record on Mt. Kilimanjaro. We don't take any mountain lightly and we approach our profession with a humble respect for the alpine landscape. Our success is a result of careful planning and preparation at the individual level, beginning months in advance of departure. We want you to achieve your goals and we remain committed to your personal needs all the way to the summit. Finally, we are available to our team members on an individual basis to assist in their personal preparation and planning – we want you to summit!

## **The S2Kilimanjaro Difference**

**Condition with us.** You'll have the opportunity to participate in regularly scheduled conditioning treks with S2 guides to help prepare for your climb to the summit of Kilimanjaro. These treks include personal instruction and are specifically designed to both evaluate and improve your performance. Can't join us for a conditioning trek? No problem – we're available to consult on your fitness and conditioning over the phone.

S2Kilimanjaro guides offer personal assessments of your overall ability, strengths and weaknesses, including physical and mental fitness. While it's important to understand individual weaknesses, we emphasize success built on identification and improvement of existing strengths.

**The right gear matters!** It's a great feeling knowing you have the right equipment to accomplish the task. Whether you're concerned about how cold it is at the summit or uneven walking conditions, we've got you covered. You'll have the opportunity to conduct gear trials with your guide and, importantly, get professional advice on product selection. Need a pack fitting? Are those new boots a little tight in the toe box on a downhill slope? Not sure what a hydration pack is or if you should use a bottle insulator on summit day? We know gear and we'll share our experience to make sure your trip is comfortable and enjoyable.

**Meet your guide and team members.** We recommend members participate in regularly scheduled team conference calls (typically three calls leading up to departure) to learn about trip developments, and to collaborate with guides and fellow team members. We also provide initial instruction on acclimatization, gear selection, conditioning and other important topics.

**A commitment to your success.** You'll have the support of highly skilled guides with extraordinary experience and credentials. We blend the talent of North American and Tanzanian staff to provide you an unsurpassed Kilimanjaro experience. Your safety and success always comes first.

**Day 1 - Arrivals:** Welcome to Arusha, Tanzania (4600'). Members arrive at Kilimanjaro International Airport throughout the day. We'll receive you at the airport

and transfer you to lodge accommodation in Arusha. In-country briefings, team orientation and a gear shake-down is typically conducted in the evening.

Note: Many members choose to arrive in Arusha a day before our itinerary begins to rest and adjust for time differences. We arrange lodging for members with early arrivals or late departures for your added convenience.

**Day 2 – Simba Camp (also commonly known as First Cave Camp):** We wake early today for the drive to the Kilimanjaro National Park office to complete permit registrations at the Marangu Gate, then transit to the Rongai Route trailhead. We'll enjoy lunch and be ready to hit the trail by early afternoon. The climb begins at the village of Nale Moru (6398') on a small path that winds through local farm fields before entering pine forest. The track then starts to climb consistently, but gently through forest that shelters a variety of wildlife, including the Kilimanjaro Colobus monkey. These monkeys are black with a long cape of white hair and a flowing white tail. Their distinctive calls are haunting in the evening hours. Nearby, the forest begins to thin out at the edge of the moorland zone (8531') where we can enjoy extensive views over the Kenyan plains.

Daily Trekking Data

Elevation Gain: 2297' / 700 m (From Arusha 3931' / 1198 m)  
Distance: 4.4 miles / 7 km  
Trekking Time: 4-5 hours  
Habitat: Rainforest

**Day 3 – Second Cave Camp:** The morning walk is a steady ascent up to an area known as the 'Second Cave' (11322'). The high moorland environment is carpeted with heather, erica and other flowering plants as we move higher toward Kibo. We'll enjoy our first view of the twin peaks of Kilimanjaro – Mawenzi and Kibo. We'll also have our first glimpse at the glacier crowning the eastern rim of Kilimanjaro's crater.

Daily Trekking Data

Elevation Gain: 2789' / 850 m  
Distance: 3.7 miles / 6 km  
Trekking Time: 4-5 hours  
Habitat: Moorland

**Day 4 - Kikelewa Camp:** Advancing from Second Cave Camp, we trek to the southeast toward Mawenzi, an impressive tower of jagged rock on Kilimanjaro's eastern shoulder. We have ascended well beyond tree line during the day's ascent, and we sometimes encounter cloud fronts passing across the high moorland. Our campsite (12041') is in a sheltered valley appointed by a small stream to replenish water and groundsels and lobelias for our enjoyment.

Daily Trekking Data

Elevation Gain: 558' / 170 m  
Distance: 5.6 miles / 9 km  
Trekking Time: 6-7 hours  
Habitat: Moorland

**Day 5 - Mawenzi Tarn Camp:** A short but steep climb up grassy slopes is rewarded by excellent views and a sense of open wilderness. We leave vegetation behind shortly before reaching the next camp at Mawenzi Tarn (14206') situated in a cirque directly beneath the towering spires of Mawenzi. The afternoon will be free to rest or explore the surrounding ridge lines as an aid to acclimatization.

Daily Trekking Data

Elevation Gain: 2165' / 660 m  
Distance: 3.1 miles / 5 km  
Trekking Time: 3-4 hours  
Habitat: High Desert

**Day 6 – Kibo Camp:** The terrain changes to scree as we slowly ascend to the saddle between Kibo and Mawenzi Peaks. The landscape here is expansive and desolate. Cloud systems regularly roll across our route with changing pressure systems. From Kibo Camp (15748'), Uhuru Peak is very close. We can take in wonderful views of Mawenzi (16890') from our camp as we spend the remainder of the day resting and preparing for a very early departure for Kilimanjaro's summit. Members are encouraged to hydrate, nourish and rest. Your guides will also be checking in to ensure you're prepared for our summit bid.

Daily Trekking Data

Elevation Gain: 1460' / 445 m  
Distance: 5.6 miles / 9 km  
Trekking Time: 3-5 hours  
Habitat: High Desert

**Day 7 - Summit Day and Millenium Camp:** We frequently have a wake-up time at midnight or before so that we can achieve the summit early in the morning and make a timely descent to Millenium Camp (12959'). Our combined ascent and descent time may take up to 14-16 hours. We navigate through the darkness as we make our way past Hans Meyer Cave and then to Gilman's Point (18638'). It's important to rest and gaze at the stars above from time to time along the way. We then traverse along the inside of the crater as we make our way toward Stella Point (18810'). This is a beautiful section of the route, navigating around massive volcanic blocks and pinnacles that circle the rim. Our movement over the loose volcanic scree is slow and steady. A well deserved break will be waiting for you at Stella Point in preparation for our final push to the summit at Uhuru Peak (19344').

As we traverse across the ridge above Stella Point, the final stretch toward the summit is uniquely wonderful. Kilimanjaro's volcanic rim is crowned with snowy glaciers appointed with walls of blue ice dropping abruptly into the steep slopes around us. A thick cushion of clouds often rests on the earth several thousand feet below. Those arriving to the summit in the early morning hours are frequently graced with a view of the sun rising into the darkness on the horizon as they make their final steps to Uhuru Peak. After taking in the beautiful view over the African continent, we descend to Millenium Camp (12959') by way of Barafu Campsite (15300') to celebrate our success.

Crater Rim Trek Option: The crater floor of Kilimanjaro is an extraordinary and surreal landscape. After achieving the summit, we extend an opportunity for members to descend into the crater to explore the surrounding glaciers. We encourage our members to join us for this unique adventure at no additional cost. Our ability to enjoy the crater is dependent on weather conditions, as well as individual acclimatization and performance.

Crater Rim Overnight Option: Individuals with a high level of fitness and performance are invited to customize their trip to include an overnight in Kilimanjaro's crater. This provides an extended opportunity to circumnavigate the rim, closely study our landscape and enjoy a walk on the surrounding glaciers. The high altitude and clear atmosphere also gives us an exceptional and unforgettable view of the constellations. Experienced trekkers and mountaineers will also find this option useful in evaluating personal acclimatization, performance and altitude ceilings.

Advance planning for an overnight in Kilimanjaro's crater is required along with an additional cost of \$275US.

#### Daily Trekking Data

Elevation Gain:	Kibo Camp to Gilman's Point: 2890' / 881 m Gilman's Point to Stella Point: 190' / 58 m Stella Point to Uhuru Peak: 534' / 165 m Uhuru Peak to Millenium Camp: - 6388' / - 1947 m
Distance:	Ascent: 3.7 miles / 6 km Descent: 6.5 miles / 10.5 km
Trekking Time:	Ascent from Kibo Camp to Gilman's Point: 5-6 hours Ascent from Gilman's Point to Stella Point: 2-3 hours Ascent from Stella Point to Uhuru Peak: 1-2 hours Descent from Uhuru Peak to Milenium Camp: 5-6 hours
Habitat:	Arctic

**Day 8 – Mweka Camp:** Our descent from Millenium Camp (12959') continues through open moorlands, forest glades and rain forest to the park gate at Mweka (5412'). From Mweka gate we return to our lodge in Arusha by vehicle and celebrate our accomplishment. This is typically accompanied with several bottles of Tusker, a local beverage!

#### Daily Trekking Data

Elevation Gain:	- 7579' / - 2310 m
Distance:	6.2 miles / 10 km
Trekking Time:	4-5 hours
Habitat:	Rain Forest

**Day 9:** Departures for wildlife safaris or Kilimanjaro International Airport for members returning home.

Wildlife Safari Options: Tanzania hosts some of the most stunning wildlife reserves in the world. We encourage our members to consider spending an additional 3-4 days after

their Kilimanjaro trek to enjoy one of our safaris customized and priced exclusively for S2 members.

Your safari will be hosted by professional wildlife guides eager to share their knowledge of habitat and wildlife behavior in the backdrop of famous reserves like the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater. Best of all, we'll plan a schedule that coincides with your Kilimanjaro trek and accommodates your individual ambitions for viewing Tanzania's wonderful wildlife.