



Introduction

All the information you need for climbing Mount Meru will be listed below. This information is based upon the specialised knowledge and experience that we have gained in this field. If you have any further queries or any questions regarding your travel plans to Tanzania and/or Mount Meru, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Requirements

The ascent of Mt Meru is physically less demanding than the ascent of the Kilimanjaro. This is due to the lower altitude, where the temperatures are so extreme and the air not so thin. However, the climb should not be underestimated as technically, the ascent is more challenging. **There are some climbing stages that are easy but a head for heights and surefootedness is an absolute necessity.** Physically, you must be fit with a good all-round condition. This is required as on average, you will be trekking between 4 and 6 hours per day while climbing approximately 1000m. Tolerance, camaraderie and a degree of flexibility is also the basis for a successful holiday.

Age Restrictions

For climbing the Mt Meru, the national park authority has a minimum age restriction of 16 years. There is no maximum age restriction and we have had customers in their 70's who successfully reached the summit of Uhuru. However, we do advise persons of a more mature age to visit their doctor or local GP for a health check before travelling.

Climate and Tourist Season

It is possible to climb Mt Meru at any time of year; however, it is generally not advisable during the rainy season from end of March to end of May. From December until end of February, the temperatures are at their highest and the rainfall the lowest. From end of June until middle of October, the temperature is a little cooler and the rainfall light.

Altitude Acclimatisation and Altitude Sickness

At a height of 4566m, a hiker on Mt Meru will certainly notice the thin air and at higher elevations, one can suffer from altitude sickness. There are many indicators of the first signs of altitude sickness; the primary symptoms are headaches, which are often combined with fatigue, loss of appetite and nausea. However, everyone reacts differently to an increase in altitude and a change in air pressure. Fitness fanatics are just as likely to succumb as couch potatoes. In the majority of cases, the symptoms are mild, disappear quite rapidly and it is possible to continue. Occasionally, the symptoms are more severe and a return to a lower elevation is required. Please remember that in certain circumstances altitude sickness can be life threatening and ignoring the symptoms may cause death. Therefore, we do not recommend the use of drugs in suppressing the symptoms of altitude sickness. To prevent harming oneself, time to acclimatise (an extra day) and also the "pole pole" method (Swahili for slowly slowly) are our preferred methods. One should also drink more to replace the fluids lost from breathing heavier in the thinner and drier air; three to four litres per day is recommended as well as supplementary mineral tablets (magnesium) help to replace lost minerals and prevent muscle cramps.

Language

The official national language of Tanzania is Swahili (also Kisuaheli). Nevertheless, English is widespread and is spoken by all the guides at Kilimanjaro and Mt Meru.

Porters and Guides

It is obligatory for a group of tourists to be accompanied by an armed park ranger at all times. On our tours, a guide and a team of experienced mountaineers will accompany you. Large groups are accompanied with extra guides, so called assistant guides. This is necessary, for instance, if the group breaks up during the ascent; the safety of a trailing or leading individual, pair or group will not be compromised and the other members will in no way be impaired.

The equipment will be transported by porters up the mountain; the guide arranges these porters according to the amount of equipment. Most parts of the climb will be prearranged and the meals are the domain of the cook. If required, arrangements for waiters etc. can be prearranged which is generally the case for large groups. A group consisting of 4 people will travel with a guide, a cook and porters, which can easily be a group of approx. 14 people. From our European understanding, it is unusual to travel with so many helping hands; taking into consideration how much equipment is needed, the numbers of porters soon make a lot of sense. The indigenous people appreciate their jobs as a guide, cook or porter as there is little opportunity to profit directly from tourism.

Tips and Mountain Crew

After the climb, it is customary to tip the members of the group. The guideline for a group (not per person) can be:

Guide: 10-12 USD / day

Cook: 7-9 USD / day

Porter: 5-7 USD / day

When you are satisfied with the services, you can naturally give a little more (bear in mind that a large proportion of their wages comes from tips). Please take the following advice and method regarding tips into consideration: ask your guide for a list of members on your tour i.e. how many guides, cooks, porters etc., then decide amongst yourselves how much you want to give. Collect the entire amount and pass it on to the chief guide; during the leaving ceremony read out aloud how much each team member receives and they know how much they can collect from the chief guide who will pass on the money. This method is the best and it saves you long debates with cooks and guides on how much they should receive. Used equipment as presents to the team members is gladly received.

Board and Accommodation

On Mt Meru, the mountain huts are in a good condition. The sleeping quarters are made up of four beds per room and the huts have roomy dining and living rooms. As the spring water on Mt. Meru is not suitable for drinking, we will provide you with 3 litres of mineral water per day. The meals are freshly prepared and it is amazing how delicious meals can be prepared in these basic surroundings. A typical daily menu is as follows:

Breakfast:

Fresh fruit, scrambled eggs or omelette, toast, margarine, peanut butter, jam, porridge, milk-, hot chocolate-, coffee-powder, and tea

Lunch:

Fresh fruit or vegetables, sandwiches, boiled eggs, chicken, milk, hot chocolate, coffee, tea.

Dinner:

Soup, bread, main dish with red meat or poultry, served with either chips, mashed potatoes, pasta, rice or vegetables. Dessert: fresh fruit. Milk, hot chocolate, coffee, tea. Advanced notification for vegetarians and people with food allergies should be given so that we can cater to these special needs.

Money

The local currency is the Tanzanian Shilling. It is illegal to import or export the Tanzanian Shilling; however, visitors can bring any amount of foreign currency with them. The US Dollar can be seen as a second currency (please take only US Dollar notes printed after 2004!) in which practically all tourists are trading in dollars. Not all hotels except credit cards.

There are cash points for example in Moshi and Arusha where you can withdraw local currency with your Visa Card. At the Barclay's Bank in Arusha, you can use an EC-Card; Traveller's cheques are generally no longer accepted, as the fees are too dear.

It is also recommended that you bring a credit card in case of an emergency.

Mobile Phones

There is generally good reception and coverage in Tanzania as well as on Mount Meru. A German phone usually works without problems. Please speak to your provider for more information about your mobile phone.

Electrical Power Supply

The camps and the mountain huts have no electricity. Solar cells are solely for the park ranger's radio equipment and the mountain hut lights. You will have to supply your own electricity from batteries when needed. In the higher colder regions, the batteries drain quicker and do not last so long. The two pin electrical plugs that are typical in Germany are not common in Tanzania. More common is the three-prong type found in Britain in which adapters for these plugs can be found at your local electrical supply shop. The power supply is 220 volts at 50Hz. Occasionally, power cuts can occur in Tanzania as well as power surges and fluctuations that are also common. Power cuts, surges and power fluctuations can potentially damage sensitive electronic devices e.g. Notebooks.

Emergency Situation

As with all activities on Mount Meru, one must bear in mind that there are no mountain rescue services like the ones you can find at the European Alps. If the situation occurs that you can no longer walk or descend the mountain under your own power, you will be either carried or brought down by a stretcher. Helicopters are not available in such cases. To save yourself from such an incident, proceed with caution and do not over exert yourself.

Travel Documents and Visas

To enter Tanzania, your passport must be valid for a minimum of six months after your intended departure date. A visa to enter Tanzania is also necessary. The visa can either be purchased before hand at the appropriate embassy in your home country or directly upon arrival at the international airport border control (as of 01.01.07). For entry from a neighbouring country (Kenya, Uganda) into Tanzania, a certification for immunization against yellow fever is mandatory. If you travel directly from Europe to Tanzania, you do not need to have a proof of immunisation. Other vaccinations are not necessary but recommended such as the usual vaccinations for Europe.

Further Important Rules

A valid return ticket is necessary. If you do not have a valid outward ticket for travel, you must be able to show that you have the available funds to purchase a flight or passage out of the country (credit card etc.). ET Investments is not to be held responsible for their clients failing to have the appropriate documents and travel tickets. Any costs incurred by the client failing to provide these documents shall be the responsibility of themselves.

Insurance

Please check that you are fully covered by your insurance when you are out of your country of residence. If you are not covered, we strongly advise upon purchasing travel insurance. Insurance that covers all health related charges and returning you to your country of residence cannot be underestimated.

Equipment and Clothing

Without the correct equipment, a mountain tour can quickly become an ordeal; this is especially true on Mount Meru. At the park entrance the weather is tropical and at the summit it can be -10°C and below. The onion system is the way to go, by wearing many layers you can add or remove clothing depending upon personal preference and is ideal for the changing climatic conditions. When you have made your booking, we automatically send you a list showing the items of kit you will require for your tour. A warm sleeping bag is essential on tours with overnight stays in tents. If you are thinking about using the one that you had as a child on summer camp, think again. You will be sleeping at temperatures in the region of -12°C and you will need a sleeping bag that will keep you warm in such conditions. For yourself, you will only need a day rucksack; your porter will carry any further luggage. All your equipment must go in a travel bag, trekking rucksack or a kit bag and not exceed 15 kg (33lbs). The porters cannot carry suitcases and cases with roll systems. We recommend packing your items inside plastic bags to protect them from the damp and rain. Please also check the baggage terms of your respective airline.

Problems en-route

To date, there have been no previous problems and we endeavour to keep it that way. If a problem on the tour does arise, it can only be rectified when the guides know about it. In addition, an open word helps a thousand times, it is also a lot better than a letter after the tour. If your complaint happens to fall upon deaf ears, please contact our local office directly and we will do our utmost to solve the problem immediately.

We hope the detailed explanation and information given above gives answers to your questions. If not, please do not hesitate to contact us. We wish you a fantastic and exhilarating trip, many unusual experiences and pleasant memories. We can only say...

'See you soon in Africa'.