

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Tanzania, Africa and Kilimanjaro**

### **Q: What is the weather like on safari?**

**A:** November into early December have the short rains. April and May have the long rains. However weather patterns are not completely predictable. You can climb Kilimanjaro and go on safari year-round, but it is preferable to avoid these rainy times. The dirt tracks that are "roads" in much of Tanzania can become impassable during the rains. January through March tends to be warmer with more chance of rain than June through October, although there is not a huge temperature variation since Tanzania is so near the equator. Temperatures can range from 60-90 degrees F during the day on safari and in the cities, although the Ngorongoro Crater area tends to be colder due to its high elevation. Nights on safari can be quite chilly (sometimes cold) any time of year.

### **Q: What are the temperatures like on Mount Kilimanjaro?**

**A:** Usually people only wear shorts or short sleeves on the first and last days on Kilimanjaro - the two lowest days. Other than that you will be wearing long pants and long sleeves, and adding layers as you move up the mountain - first a fleece, then a windbreaker over it, and eventually a down jacket often at the two highest camps. Hat and gloves are often brought out at the second camp on the mountain, where frost usually appears on our tents for the first time. Crater camp may have temperatures around 0 to +10 degrees F overnight, sometimes colder. Generally, Kilimanjaro will not be what you picture as equatorial Africa in terms of temperature. It is usually colder than people expect, and people "feel" the cold more than they expect at any given temperature due to the altitude.

### **Q: Will there be snow on Mount Kilimanjaro?**

**A:** You don't walk on Kilimanjaro's glaciers and snowfields, but you will see them from the trail and camps. Sometimes there is snow on the trail and in the camps - more likely at Crater camp, but sometimes lower on the mountain after storms. Like any large mountain, Kilimanjaro can make her own weather at any time of year.

### **Q: What kind of shots or medications will I need for my trip?**

**A:** There are no required vaccines for travel to Tanzania when flying directly from the United States (yellow fever vaccine may be required at ground border crossings if traveling from other countries where yellow fever is present). However there are several vaccines your travel clinic will suggest. Malaria preventive medication is highly suggested - some of our trips don't even see mosquitoes, but you should be prepared. For climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, certain medications to help prevent altitude illness, or treat symptoms, are recommended. This is all explained in a helpful document we send you far in advance of your trip.

### **Q: What airport should I fly into?**

**A:** Kilimanjaro International Airport (airport code JRO). This airport is located between Arusha and Moshi, Tanzania. Other airports such as Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya are distant enough to require an extra travel day in one or both directions.

**Q: How safe is Tanzania?**

**A:** Tanzania is thankfully a peaceful country. Visitors generally feel very safe here, and find most Tanzanians warmly welcoming of travelers. Of course in cities one should be careful in certain areas especially at night, just like in the United States - but your itinerary usually won't include much time in the city. Some of the hazards of travel in Tanzania include the poor road system and erratic driving habits of the locals, and the susceptibility of visitors to stomach bugs just like in other less developed countries. We provide information on how to prevent and quickly treat stomach bugs so it won't ruin your trip if you get one!

**Q: Do I need a passport and visa to travel to Tanzania?**

**A:** Yes. Your passport should be valid for 6 months AFTER your return from Tanzania. Your travel visa can be obtained in the US prior to departure (we'll provide instructions), or can be obtained at the airport or ground border crossing on arrival in Tanzania. Visas cost \$100 USD.

**Q: What about tips?**

**A:** Tips are an important part of their income for the hardworking Tanzanians who make up our crews. We provide tipping guidelines to our clients, although of course tipping is always at your discretion.

**Q: What kind of gear do I need to climb Mount Kilimanjaro?**

**A:** We provide our climbers with an extensive gear packing list far in advance of the trip. Some gear such as sleeping bags and hiking poles can be rented with advance notice. You do not need mountaineering (winter) boots, crampons, ropes, or ice axes.

**Q: I'm worried about carrying my 15-20 pound daypack for 8 days on Mount Kilimanjaro at altitude. Any suggestions?**

**A:** With advance notice and for a fee, we can easily hire an extra porter to hike next to you and carry your daypack. This is especially important for those who aren't used to hiking with a pack on, or climbers who are more worried than average about the effects of being at altitude. And, you are providing one more much-needed job in Tanzania!

**Q: How fit do I need to be to climb Mount Kilimanjaro?**

**A:** People of all fitness levels and experience levels climb Mount Kilimanjaro. However, it is important to be physically fit. It's helpful to have hiking and camping experience, although not everyone does. Please talk to us about your concerns in advance of registration.

**Q: What are my chances of getting to the top on these western routes?**

**A:** In general, chances are very high on the 8 day or longer western routes on Mount Kilimanjaro. Summit success rates are estimated at 98%. Contrast that to 50-60% on the 5 day Marangu route and you can see why we recommend taking your time to acclimatize.

**Q: What if there is an illness or injury on Mount Kilimanjaro? How do you deal with emergencies?**

**A:** Taking our longer, western approach routes with more acclimatization time greatly reduces the chances of having a serious altitude illness emergency. However, we are always prepared, and injuries can happen here as anywhere. Our guides have extensive Wilderness First Responder training. Our groups are equipped with oxygen and Gamow® or similar hyperbaric bags. These are used to treat the patient while arranging evacuation for serious altitude illness. Tanzania has hospitals we use for emergencies. Serious cases may be transferred to Nairobi. Rest assured, we have plans in place to ensure you are evacuated as quickly and safely as possible in any type of emergency. But most importantly, we work hard to avoid emergencies in the first place.

**Q: What are your payment arrangements?**

**A:** For most trips we require a non-refundable 25% deposit on booking so we can confirm your lodging and other arrangements. The final payment (also non-refundable) is due 60 days prior to departure.

**Q: How can I "give back" to the wonderful people of Tanzania?**

**A:** Plan to stay longer and volunteer (we can help you arrange this). Bring school supplies to drop off at a primary school. Bring educational items to drop off at a children's home/orphanage. After you return, become a supporter of a non-profit organization doing good work in Tanzania. There are many ways to give back, and our clients are often moved to do so. A frequent comment is that people wish they had scheduled a longer trip so they could stay and volunteer.