



Mount Kenya Treks

Sirimon with Summit Peaks Circuit

Mount Kenya is Africa's second highest mountain. It offers easy or challenging ascents with superb scenic beauty. Mount Kenya is the country's highest mountain. Sitting astride the equator its icy summit reaches to 5199m (17,058 ft). All of the mountain above the 3200m contour forms a national park. In fact the mountain consists of three principal zones; the rocky peak area, actually an eroded volcanic plug, with its mantle of glaciers and snowfields.

Part of the mountain's fascination is the variation in flora and fauna as the altitude changes. The lower slopes are covered with dry upland forest, the true montane forest begins at 2,000 m. and is mainly

cedar and podoc. At 2,500 m. begins a dense belt of bamboo forest which merges into the upper forest of smaller trees, interspersed with glades. In this area the trees are festooned with high altitude moss.

These forest belts are host to many different animals and plants with at least 11 unique species. Game to view includes: Black and White Colobus and Sykes monkeys, bushbuck, buffalo, elephant and, lower down, Olive Baboon, waterbuck, black rhino, black fronted duiker, leopard, giant forest hog, genet cat, bush pig and hyena. More elusive is the bongo, a rare type of forest antelope.

A number of other rare or endangered species can be found here: Sunni Buck, Mt Kenya Mole Shrew, skinks (lizard), and a variety of owls. Occasional sightings have been recorded of albino zebra.

Footprint Itinerary

Page 2 of 6



The high altitude heath at the top (3,000 - 3,500 m.) is generally open, dotted with shrubs: African Sage, protea and helicrysum. The peak (above 3,500 m.) is moorland, with little game other than high altitude zebra and eland common in the northern moorland.

It is no wonder that this remote majestic wonderland was considered as God's domain by awed farmers at its foothills. Many rivers flow from the perpetual snows, among them the mighty Tana, Kenya's largest and longest river and source of much of Kenya's electricity supply. Most visitors are content to marvel at the mountain's beauty but some will want to attempt to reach the peaks; a feat requiring considerable rock climbing skill. But the mountain's lesser peaks and glaciers can be scaled and walked by the fit and the adventurous. Point Lenana, 4985m, can be easily reached. In fact the majority of visitors go to the mountain to enjoy the walking and especially the high level hut-to-hut hike round the mountain with its humbling vistas.

Wildlife within the forests below the park boundary includes elephant, buffalo, lion, several species of antelope including the rare bongo and occasionally the melanistic forms of both the leopard and the serval. Much of this wildlife can be seen from the safety of Mountain Lodge which lies just inside the forest on the south side of the mountain. The best months are January and February and late August through September.

Itinerary

Highly recommended for both experienced and inexperienced high altitude trekkers as it offers maximum chances of acclimatisation, virtually guaranteeing successful ascent to the summit. From Shipton's, you skirt the high peaks to the east, bypassing Kami and Two-tarn huts as you marvel at

the splendid view of the rocky towers, tarns and suspended glaciers of the west face of Batian peak to attempt the summit from Mackinders camp in the Teleki valley and eventually descending through the Sirimon.

Day 1: Morning transfer from Nairobi, arriving at Mountain Rock Lodge for lunch. In the afternoon is a nature walk (3-4 hours) through the forest to the MauMau caves, the former hideouts for Kenya's pre-independence guerrilla fighters who fought against the British colonial masters. The escort naturalist guide for the trek talks about their history and the flora and fauna of the forest. Dinner and overnight at Mountain Rock Lodge.

Day 2: Leave the lodge by 1000hrs together with your guide and porters and drive for less than two hours to Sirimon Park gate (2600m). On completion of park entry formalities, have picnic lunch then begin a 3-4 hour hike through forest. Ascend 700m bypassing the bamboo, rosewood and heather zones to Old Moses camp. The forest and bamboo are home to hundreds of buffaloes, elephants, bushbucks and a plethora of bird species. Dinner and overnight at Old Moses Camp (3300m)

Day 3: After an early breakfast commence a 6-7 hour trek to Shipton's camp. The hike is awesome but a good test on individual endurance on the mountain as you cover a 900m. ascent in 6-7 hours. The moorland walk takes you across hills and valleys in the sprawling moorlands where you see several unique and interesting plants and animals including the Giant groundsels and lobelias and the mountain hyrax. Dinner and overnight at Shiptons Camp (4200m)

Day 4: Departing at 0800hrs ascend the Hausberg col (4700m) then descend steeply to Hausberg valley and Oblong tarns before making a further steep ascent, crossing huge boulders via Two Tarn on the way to Mackinder's camp (4,300m) which is located along the Naromoru route within the Teleki Valley. Dinner and overnight at Mackinder's Camp (4300m)

Day 5: Leaving the camp at 0300hrs you hike up the steep scree slopes and glacier to Point Lenana (4985m), the hikers summit. It is planned that you arrive in time to witness the African Sun rising over the equator, reflect its golden glow on the Majestic peaks of Batian and Nelion. Later descend to Shipton's camp (4200m) for breakfast then relax for the rest of the day. Dinner and overnight at Shipton's Camp (4200m)

Day 6: Have early breakfast before your descend to Sirimon roadhead (2600m) in 4-5 hours, from where

you connect the vehicle for transfer back to Mountain Rock Lodge for a hot shower and lunch and relax for the rest of the afternoon. Dinner and overnight at the lodge.

Day 7: Morning at leisure. Chance for horse riding, nature walks, sport fishing, boating etc. Lunch then return to Nairobi.

What you need to know: You carry only a small bag with your personal effects while your back pack, sleeping bags, clothes, food and kitchen gear are carried by porters. The group is guided by an experienced Mt. Kenya guide. Nights are spent in huts on the mountain and in small tents with foam mattresses in the foothills. Besides your normal effects, you are advised to bring a medium sized back pack, sleeping bag, warm clothes, good hiking shoes, nylon rain suit, a pair of sunglasses and sun block.

What is included: Transport from Nairobi to your hotel and park gate, hotel on your first and last night, all food starting with evening meal on the first day and ending with breakfast on the last day, services of a mountain guide and porters, all hut fees, camping equipment, acclimatization tour to the equator.

Mt Kenya and Safari Kit List

This list covers equipment and clothing recommended for a Mt Kenya trek and safari. Your main bags will be carried by vehicles or porters. At all times you will only be walking with day-packs.

Day-pack - large enough to carry spare clothes, waterproofs, camera, lunch, drink, etc. Your main bag should be a large kit bag or ideally a rucksack which is easier for porters to carry. This should weigh less than 16 kg for the Mt Kenya section. A light kit-bag is useful for storing any gear not needed on the mountain section.

Sleeping bag: A good 4 season bag. Temperatures can be minus 10 C high on Mt Kenya. A quality liner is useful for extra warmth, upgrading a 3 season to a 4 season bag. Full length zip useful for ventilation on warmer nights.

Sleeping mat: e.g. Karrimat or Thermarest non-slip.

Water bottle: 1 litre, (1.5 litre if you need to drink a lot) Purifying tablets or iodine - juice drink powders to disguise the taste.

Torch: Spare bulbs, batteries. Head torch useful but not essential. Small spare torch.

Walking pole/s: Highly recommended by some, awkward for others - try one out first.

Camera: Plenty of film. Spare camera batteries and cleaning kit, dust proof camera bag.

The following list of clothing is provided as a guideline only. But your clothing should allow you the flexibility to cope with the range of weather conditions you may encounter on this trip.

Clothing: underwear, light cotton/polycotton for general wear, and insulating next-to-skin ("thermal") vest and long johns for the cold or wet days on the trek. Socks suitable for walking and general wear. T-shirts, long sleeved shirt, sweatshirt, trousers/skirt for general wear. Walking shirt. Warm pullover/jersey, warm fleece or down jacket. Walking trousers, skirt or breeches. Walking shorts. Track suit (for evenings in camp, and as an extra layer when cold). Thick jacket (fleece, fibre-pile, or pile and pertex mix). Waterproof and windproof jacket/cagoule and over trousers. Walking boots - well broken in. Thickish soled training shoes or light walking boots. Sandals/flip-flops. Gaiters for keeping out stones, seeds, scratches etc. Sunglasses, sun hat, (packable/collapsible), warm hat/balaclava, warm gloves, scarf, neckerchief, swimming costume.

Other kit: Towel, toilet kit, spare specs, personal first aid kit (e.g. sticking plasters, lint, antiseptic cream, aspirins/paracetamol, antihistamine, malaria pills and any special personal medication). Sun cream, insect repellent, lip salve, wet wipes, sewing kit. Binoculars for bird/animal spotting, plant, bird and wildlife guides. A wristwatch with an alarm function is useful for early starts. Use strong plastic bags inside your rucksack to keep out rain and dust.

Documents: Passport, passport photocopy (main page only), travellers cheques, insurance certificate, etc all in a secure money belt/pouch. Wallet for day to day use. Diary, notebook.

If you have spare items of clothing, boots, or kit you don't use anymore, and some unused baggage allowance, please bring them specifically to give to our local members of staff (porters, guides, etc.) - they will be greatly appreciated. People often overlook this item only to regret it when they're out in Africa and realise how useful their things would have been to the locals.

ABOUT MOUNT KENYA

To the ancient Kikuyu and the Kamba tribesmen the peaks of mount Kenya viewed from a distance

resembled the black and white plumage of the male ostrich.

These black and white patches on the mountain are actually the rocks and the glaciers that form the peak area. It was from this resemblance that the kikuyu named the mountain "kirinyaga", which translated means, the area of the Ostrich, similarly it was from this same comparison that they named their god "Mwene Nyaga", implying that their god who to them stayed at the top on Mt Kenya, was the owner of the Ostrich they imagined to be on the top.

The Kikuyu believe, "Mwene Nyaga" whom they also called "Ngai" lived on top of Kirinyaga (Mt. Kenya). The Kikuyu held Mt. Kenya as a sacred place, which they faced when praying, or offering sacrifices to "Mwene Nyaga" (God).

The Kamba people have a slightly different accent and pronounce "Kirinyaga" as "Kinyaa". Being the first people to encounter the inquisitive European explorer when they sighted the majestic mountain, the European used the Kamba version to name the mountain, and Mt. Kenya. The country was later named after the mountain.

Mount Kenya is the highest mountain. The twin summits Batian and Nelion require technical climbing on rock or ice, while mountain hikers reach Point Lenana, the third highest peak standing at 4985m, quite easily.

The valleys and ridges radiate out from the main peaks, a pattern that has resulted from many centuries of glacial erosion. Over the years discoverers have surveyed the most ideal and passable areas on these ridges and valleys and came up with different routes to connect to the summit circuit (the trail that circles all the major peaks on the mountain).

FLORA AND FAUNA

The flora and fauna has adapted to the environmental conditions of the equatorial mountain. The high rainfall and mild temperatures characteristics of the lower slopes of the mountain sustain luxurious growth of the forest. Similar plants of higher elevation are and alpine zone adapted to exist under the harsh climatic regime of the upper slopes.

The vegetation of mount Kenya divides the mountain into distinctive zones or belts, which are similar from all directions of the mountain, but vary in extent

depending with the amount of annual rainfall experienced in a particular area.

THE ZONES & BELTS OF THE MOUNTAIN.

FORESTS: Between approximately 2100 – 2400 metres

BAMBO: Between approximately 2400- 2850 metres

HYGENIA – HYPERICUM ZONE: Also known as the Rosewood Zone which is a high altitude rain forest between approximately 2850 – 3000 metres.

HEATH ZONE: Also known as Ericaceous zone with giant heaths or bushes and tussock grass from above 3000 – 3300 metres.

THE ALPINE ZONE: Between about 3300 – 4350 metres is the home of many unique high altitude plants such as protea, helichrysums, ostrich plum lobelia the giant lobelia, senecios, groundsel and the very the expansive fields of tussock grass which is the main cover of the Alpine Zone.

THENIVAL ZONE: Above 4350 metres to the top of the mountain, the Zone of rock and ice, vegetation is only present in the most sheltered situations and for the most part, the slopes are of bare gravel and scree from which the glaciers have only recently retreated.

FAUNA

FOREST, BAMBOO AND HAGENEA – HYPERICUM ZONES BETWEEN 2100 – 3000 METRES.

This zone hosts a rich fauna. Among the larger animals to be found are the cape buffaloes, bushbucks and the elephants. The black rhinoceros is very rare and it is very restricted to the North – Western sections of the mountain. Smaller animals include the attractive sykes monkeys, the black and white Columbus Monkey, the black-faced vervet, the black tipped or slender mongoose and few diurnal mongooses can be seen during the day. Other animals include defassa waterbuck and the Burch ells zebras seen in the lower part of the forest of the Sirimon track. Leopards are sometimes spotted on the Sirimon and Naro moru tracks. Birds are also plentiful. Among the larger birds of prey, the following can be seen: the white-backed vultures, the crowned hawk, eagle, the crested eagle, the mountain buzzard and augur buzzard with its beautiful red tail. Some of the great birds of prey include: the great sparrow hawk and the African goshawk.

The sunbird can be seen hovering around the flowers.

HEATH AND ALPINE ZONES between 3000 – 4350 metres

The most notable animals seen on this zone are: the spotted hyena, large spotted genet, black tipped mongoose and porcupine. In the upper forest zone into the moorland is the black backed jackals and hunting dogs. Elephants, buffaloes, rhino and eland seem to migrate up the mountain into the Alpine zone where leopards are permanent residents in the Alpine valleys.

THE VARIOUS ROUTES TO CLIMB MT.KENYA

All the routes to Mtkenya are aimed at connecting the SUMMIT CIRCUIT ROUTE. There are three mainly commonly used routes namely: The Sirimon, Naro moru, and The Chogoria route.

SIRIMON ROUTE

This route provides the easiest and most scenic access to the Northern side of the central peaks, which include BATIAN, NELION and LENANA. The track is 15 km from Nanyuki town heading towards Meru. This routes has a lot of advantages that makes it more favorable and comfortable.

It lies on the northwestern side of Mt. Kenya, and generally escapes some rainfall, making it drier than other routes most time of the year.

There are two permanent camps, the Old Moses at 3300 m and Shipton's camp 4200 m (overlooking the main peaks)

From the Mackinder valley, where the Shipton camp stands, you have the panoramic view of all the main peaks including Terere and Sendeyo two ancient parasitic vents of the main peaks.

Water is plentiful and you can always refill your bottles

You also have a chance to cross the Equator both at Nanyuki and on your to Old Moses Camp.

CHOGORIA ROUTE.

This route provides access to the peaks, from the eastern side of the mountain. The route begins from chogoria town; about 96km from Embu and 64km from Meru. It is regarded as being the most beautiful route to the mountain. Ernest Carr, who made a vehicle track to the moorland, opened it in 1920s. It is however, a much longer route, compared to the others.

Camping is possible at the road head and water is available from a stream that passes by. Mintos Hut (4300m) is an excellently sited hut on the plateau overlooking Lake Michaelson 300m below. Spectacular views can be sighted at the Nithi George, by walking ten minutes south-east of the Mintos hut to the edge of the "Temple." From Hall Tarn the trail continues to the Austria Hut (4790m) via square Tarn and the Tooth Col, then round the head of the Hobley Valley. Alternatively Shipton's Camp (4200m) may be reached (3 hours), via Simba Col. Drop down towards lower Simba Tarn and turn left to Shipton's Camp.

BURGURET ROUTE

The route starts from Mountain Rock Hotel, and goes through the forest past Gathiuru Forest Station to an indistinct road head at the end of the plantation area – 2500m. The trail continues from here to elephant camp 2600m. The trail cuts through tropical rainforest till it gets to the more open Hagenia –Hypericum Zone 2860m and eventually to the Heath Zone from where you can now clearly see the peaks. Further on after the castle there is a good campsite 'kampi ya farasi' on which we pitch up our tents for the night.

From 'kampi ya farasi', the trail swings left and climbs steeply out of the valley. The ridge bears right again, and a walk over rocky ground brings you round the hill. The trail then swings to the left via the Hausberg Col and Oblong Tarn to Mackinder's valley and descends down to Shipton's Camp (4200m).

NARO MORU ROUTE

This route to the Teleki Valley and is the shortest way to the peaks. It is the most densely populated with hikers owing to the fact that is the shortest way up, and most obvious trail. A steep marshy section known as the Vertical bog, is reached one hour from Met Station, this section is terrible and is covered in two hours. After three to four hours from Met Station the path reaches the crest of the ridge overlooking Teleki Valley (4000m)

The path contours along the right hand side of the Teleki Valley, keeping high and then gradually descending to pass Naro Moru stream to Mackinder's Camp (4200m). From Met Station to Mackinder's camp is app 5-6 hours of hiking. The Austrian hut can be reached in a further 4 hours walk and another 45 min you see point Lenana (4985m)

SUMMIT CIRCUIT OF THE MAN PEAKS – ANTI-CLOCKWISE

Beginning from Shipton's Camp you ascend directly to Kami Hut, follow the sandy scree to Hausberg Col and drop steeply to Oblong and Hausberg Tarn for a short rest.

After your rest the path leads straight on between the two tarn's to reach the foot of a scree slope that climbs steeply up a to reach a col with Nanyuki tarn as its base.

The path trends left and downwards from the col passing below Arthurs seat, trends to reach Nanyuki Tarn, passes to the left of the tarn, to climb a short rocky section, then cross a small col to reach Hut Tarn, turning right to reach Two Tarn Hut (4490m)

From here the path continues along the right side of the tarn, climbs a bolder to reach a scree overlooking Teleki Valley then drops through a steep scree slope to reach Mackinder camp (4200m).

From Mackinder's trend northwards to meet a path coming from American Camp, the path to Austrian Hut can be seen snaking up the large scree slope on the opposite side of the valley, follow this clearly cairned path around the head of a valley. Cross a boulder scree and a large buttress, trend steeply upwards to reach Tooth Col, from this col it is possible to see down into Georges Valley and Hall Tarns.

The path then drops down to square Tarn, continues to follow cairns trending left and down towards Simba Tarn, drop steeply down towards the lower Simba Tarn the cut across the to the shiptons camp. Hiking time to complete the circuit is eleven hours. It is advisable to split the trip into two by spending a night at the Mackinder's camp on the Teleki Valley (4200m).

Important: Before you travel please check your **Tour Voucher** and **Arrival Information** for the latest joining instructions. This will be sent to you upon receipt of final payment.

All itineraries are subject to change without prior notice.