

Kilimanjaro Acclimatisation

Acclimatisation to altitude is achieved over time. The shorter the climb duration, the less chance there is of acclimatising sufficiently to altitude. So fewer people reach the summit and more people are forced to descend early. The Marangu five days climb is typical of an itinerary that is simply too short for acclimatisation.

Sufficient time to acclimatise is the most important single factor for a successful high altitude challenge.

Gane and Marshall recommend our 7, 8 and 9 day treks on Mount Kilimanjaro. Currently these routes are the **Rongai Route** (7) and **Lemosho Route** (8), **Lemosho** (9) and **Kilimanjaro Northern Circuit** (9). This means 7, 8 and 9 days **on the mountain**. Some companies state they offer 8 days climbs, when in fact that includes 2 hotel days and so they only offer 6 days on the mountain. We also offer a six days Rongai Route, but this is generally climbed following acclimatisation on Mt Meru – one of the best combo climbs in East Africa. We also offer Rongai (6) after acclimatising in the Crater Highlands and visiting world famous Ngorongoro Crater.

The routes we recommend have some of the most sensible ascent profiles up the mountain and climbing Kilimanjaro on fewer days not only reduces your chances of reaching the summit, but also puts you at more danger of AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness) and reduces the amount of enjoyment you will have on your trek.

Acute Mountain Sickness is the name given to the conditions caused by not acclimatising properly to the reduced oxygen in the atmosphere that you experience at altitude. Typically effects are not felt until you are over 3000m above sea level. These conditions can take several forms: headaches, nausea, dizziness, insomnia, and loss of appetite are the main examples. The main risks associated with AMS occurs when it is not spotted early and these minor issues progress to more serious conditions HACE (High Altitude Cerebral Edema), which in short is fluid on the brain, and HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema), fluid on the lungs.

To give yourself the best chance of avoiding these, you need to ensure you acclimatise properly during your trek.

The stats are not kept in fine detail but a rough guideline on the 8 days climbs is that 92-98% reach the true summit. On the 7 days climbs 80-95% reach the true summit. On the 6 days climbs around 60-75% reach the true summit, on the 5 days climbs even fewer people summit.



We appreciate that price is an important factor when choosing which route and company to climb with. Shorter climbs are inevitably cheaper than climbing in 7 or 8 days but this is marginal. We feel the extra cost you could face in coming down the mountain early, and the disappointment you may feel in not reaching the summit far outweigh this small saving.

We want you to enjoy your time on the mountain and do so safely. With that in mind we encourage the longer and more responsible climb profiles of 7, 8 or 9 days. Or talk to us about perhaps using a Meru climb or Ngorongoro safari to prepare before you set off up Kilimanjaro on the shorter climb itineraries.

Contact Gane and Marshall for advice. We've been climbing Kilimanjaro for over two decades!
Telephone 01822-600-600 email: info@ganeandmarshall.com web: www.ganeandmarshall.com