



HATARI

Mt. Meru Climb

“Mt. Meru lacks a lot of the things Kilimanjaro has in abundance: high price, altitude sickness, droves of tourists. No wonder it's so worthwhile.”
(Quote by [Graydon Hazenberg](#))

Mount Meru, the rain god for the Arusha and Meru people, is often overlooked by travelers and mountaineers because it is “only” the fourth highest mountain in Africa. Meru is admittedly not a substitute for Kilimanjaro’s achievement-orientated travelers; however those who climb both mountains invariably say that they enjoyed Mount Meru more.



Meru is less crowded than Kilimanjaro, considerably less expensive to climb, and though a more challenging, rugged trail, the altitude (4,600 meters) is less likely to create the health problems associated with Kilimanjaro’s great height (almost 5900 meters).

Perhaps what makes Meru so special in comparison to Kili is the opportunity to see animals on foot. The lush forests of Arusha National Park surround the mountain, and the animals are free to roam up onto the slopes. Big game animals can be seen on the lower slopes even at the outset upon your first steps from Hatari Lodge, your very own mountain lodge! For the first two nights as well as last night this will be your base, with a panoramic view of the mountain in front of you.

The trek begins and ends at the Hatari lodge, the perfect luxury base camp for your adventure.

Lodge and mountain program

Though often ignored in favour of its big sister Kilimanjaro, Mount Meru is a worthy trekker's paradise. This massive volcano towers over 3,000 meters above Arusha town, which lies at the foothills on its south side. The mountain endured a violent explosion at an estimated 200 million years ago, and in its wake the explosion left towering cliffs in a gaping U shaped ridge facing east towards Kilimanjaro. The crater stands today in a protected amphitheatre of sorts, thousands of feet below the summit rocks. The craggy top lies at the westernmost point of the summit ridge and juts boldly into the sky at 4566 m (14,979 ft). From the top, one can look out at Kilimanjaro from the highest perch possible.... Perhaps there is no better vantage point to gaze at Africa's tallest mountain, approximately 80 kilometers to the northeast. The trail to the summit follows the northern rim of the natural amphitheatre which forms Meru Crater. The trail skirts the ridgeline, and above the Saddle (between the summit and Little Meru Peak (12,533 ft / 3,820 m)), the route is quite steep, with sections of rock scrambling and sheer drops on one side. At the summit, the cliffs drop almost 1200 meters to the crater floor. The final overnight trek is quite difficult due to the altitude and the steep terrain. It is recommended that only experienced hikers ascend to the summit.

What makes this trek truly special is the chance to see animals on foot. The lower section of the trail runs into the forest on the Meru crater floor, with many large, potentially dangerous game animals about. An armed ranger comes along on this trek for safety, the biggest danger being Cape Buffalo and elephant. You may see while on this trek many animals, including Cape Buffalo, giraffe, elephant, waterbuck, bushbuck, dik dik, warthog, olive baboon, Abyssinian (black & white) Colobus monkey, Sykes Monkey, and may find traces of leopard, civet cat, red duiker and mountain duiker. Bird life is amazing, with the Momella Lakes close by, attracting thousands of European and African migrant species in the green season.

This 4-day trek takes an extra day on the mountain, allowing a less hurried pace, and more importantly a later departure for the final ascent to the summit. We depart only an hour before dawn, and experience the magnificent volcanic alpine scenery, in daylight.

Day 1

- Arrival by KLM at Kilimanjaro airport and transfer by road through the Arusha National Park to Hatari Lodge. (This transfer takes 1 hour)

Upon arrival at Hatari Lodge, light dinner before retiring for the 1st night in Africa between Tanzania's two tallest mountains: Meru and Kilimanjaro.

(If arriving from Dar es Salaam, Arusha airport or Nairobi, you will be met and transferred to the lodge for refreshments and snacks at Hatari Lodge in the afternoon. Depending on the arrival time, we can arrange a canoeing safari on the Momella lakes, where you can see hippopotamus, giraffe, flamingoes and other wetland water birds. Back at the lodge, enjoy sundowners on the lodge's wooden platform, with views across the Momella meadow to Kilimanjaro's glaciers, glowing pink the late afternoon light.)

Dinner and overnight at Hatari Lodge.

Day 2

Full day game drive in Arusha National Park including a visit to Ngurdoto Crater, reaching Buffalo Viewpoint before midday. From here we have an excellent view over and into Ngurdoto Crater and behind us the sunlit volcanic walls of Mt. Meru. We search for Colobus and Sykes monkeys waking up on their favorite night resting branches.

The Ngurdoto crater floor, home to herds of buffalo, giraffe, warthog as well as elephant is a reserve within a reserve. To nature's advantage, humans are not allowed on the floor however due to the walls not being as steep as Ngorongoro you

can easily look into the crater and watch all the animal movements with your naked eye. Binoculars of course are recommended.

We'll walk along the crater rim to the northern side, with great views on Kilimanjaro. Here a picnic lunch is served. We return via Little Serengeti with zebras and bushbuck ever common to Hatari Lodge, our destination for convalescence, with afternoon tea/coffee and cake.

(For all KLM arrivals – Morning game drive and walk at Ngurdoto Crater rim, with lunch. Afternoon drive to Momella Lake, for canoeing, with sundowners at the Momella Lakes)

Dinner and overnight at Hatari Lodge.

Day 3 Hatari Lodge - Miriakamba Hut (8,250 ft / 2,514 m)

Elevation Gain: 1,014 meters

Trekking Time: From 3 to 7 hours.

Early morning breakfast and together with your mountain chef and mountain guide, you shall leave Hatari Lodge on foot for the slopes of Mount Meru. An Arusha National Park Ranger and some porters will meet us on the other side of the river. We are required to use an armed ranger on this hike, as the presence of wild animals poses a potential danger to hikers. The park ranger is armed with a rifle, as cape buffalo are aggressive and territorial animals. Elephants and warthogs also pose a potential threat.

From the meeting point it is a relatively gentle three-hour ascent to Miriakamba Hut (2,514 m). Soon we pass from open meadows into well-developed woodland – keep your eyes on the treetops as there is a good chance to spot a troupe of black and white colobus monkeys. At an altitude of about 2000m we enter a forest zone. We cross a small mountain stream where afterward we can relax, bird watch and eat some snacks. We continue from here upward through intermittent thick canopy forest of fig and camphor trees, and alpine meadows with many wildflowers such as the red hot poker, gladiola, and St. John's Wort, We continue climbing through the woodland until we reach an exposed rock on which we take a break and eat lunch. After lunch, continue hiking in montane woodland until we arrive at Miriakamba Hut. In the afternoon we have ample time to walk down to explore Meru Crater. It will take us about 45 minutes to 1 hour to reach the crater floor. From here soon walk the Njeku viewpoint, a platform overlooking a waterfall, with breathtaking views of the ash cone and the summit rocks nearly 2,000 meters overhead. Allow 2-3 hours for this diversion. The 3667m high ash cone in the crater can be climbed from here in another 1.5 hours, but can only be climbed with special permission, as the route is for expert climbers only.

Miriakamba Hut consists of two solid and well-maintained dormitory style houses which can accommodate up to forty guests. The Hatari Mountain Team shall prepare then serve your meals in the separate dining area with benches and tables, in the entrances to each dormitory. There are toilet facilities, running water from faucets, and solar panels provide electricity in the evening, inside the dormitories. Lights out at 9pm, so a torch or headlamp is necessary...

Day 4 Miriakamba Hut - Saddle Hut (11,550 ft / 3,500 m)

Elevation Gain: 986 meters

Trekking Time: From 3 to 5 hours.

The hike from Miriakamba to Saddle is a relatively short but very steep climb, through montane forest and scrubland. After breakfast, we leave Miriakamba and briefly walk along flat land before entering the montane forest. Here we start the steep ascent through a forest of moss-covered trees, with wildflowers dotting the trailside. Watch your step during this climb as there are many fresh piles of buffalo dung and columns of biting army ants.

We continue hiking the steep trail until we reach a brief opening in the woods called "Mgongo wa Tembo" (Elephant Ridge). On a clear day, you'll see excellent views across the forested crater floor to the southern rim, and the cone and cliffs which drop from the summit. We break for a short time, and take in the view, enjoy some water and a snack, before continuing the climb through scrub bushes and heather trees. The soil becomes more sandy and dry, and there are new species of wildflowers. We climb into the saddle between Little Meru Peak and the summit. Reach Saddle Hut in time for lunch and spend a few hours relaxing in the sun.

The more energetic can hike to the summit of Little Meru (3,820m) for breathtaking panoramic views. On a cloudy day you will see cloud formations rise from the Meru Crater floor upward toward the summit. You can often look across the flat tops of clouds to clearly see Mount Kilimanjaro. On a clear day you can look out over the forests of Arusha National Park, and beyond toward the Momella Lakes and Ngurdoto Crater, and eventually over the Masai Steppe, and south to the distant Blue Mountains, which define the horizon. The hike from Saddle to Little Meru Peak takes one to two hours round-trip. We suggest a 4:00pm hike which puts you at the top in time to relax for a while and watch the sun set above the clouds (6:45 pm). It does get cold on top of Little Meru so bring a jacket, gloves and a hat to wear while you wait for the sunset.

We might be hiking through mist and fog on day two but usually come out of the clouds at Saddle Hut. The normal cloud cover of Arusha National Park burns off at about 3,200 meters. Saddle Hut lies at 3,500 meters. Saddle Hut is similar to Miriakamba Hut in that it is extremely well-maintained, with separate facilities for mountain staff and tourists. The only difference is that sleeping quarters at Saddle are divided into rooms with from 4 to 12 beds each. The rooms have locking doors and conserve heat better than the large rooms at Miriakamba. There is running water only part of the year, but your Hatari Mountain Team will carry enough water for food preparation and water for beverages, as well as water for hot water bottles (bottles not provided), and water for face & hand washing upon reaching camp (approximately 2 liters of warm water provided to each person in a wash pail). Also water is provided for hand-washing before each meal.

Day 5 Saddle Hut - Summit (14,979 ft / 4,566 m) - **Miriakamba Hut**

Elevation Gain: 1066 meters

Elevation loss: 2052 meters (Summit to Miriakamba Hut)

Trekking Time: The total trekking time this day is from 8 to 11 hours.

After an early wake up at 4am, and breakfast at 4:30, we begin the hike at 5am to Mount Meru's summit, Socialist Peak. We start off the morning with a steep climb up to Rhino Point (3,800m), reaching the top of Rhino around sunrise. While we cross a small rock bridge, and then continue going up and down over the mix of rocky and loose-scrree-covered trail. The trail does include some rock scrambling. We continue along the ridge trail, climbing alternately through sandy scree. This section of the trail can be frustrating for those who wish to hike quickly, as often you take one step forward and slide a half-step backward. Also the trail skirts a knife-edge ridge, with cliffs on one side and a steep slope on the other, exacerbating the condition for those who suffer from vertigo. There are steep drops to both sides of the trail and in some places and you must watch your step and follow the trail markers, the national park ranger, and your Harati Mountain Guide! The temperatures will range from +10 – 10 degrees Celsius at the time of departure and will remain in this range until about 7am, when the sun warms the air. A warm pair of gloves and hat is required, as well as windproof-waterproof jacket and trousers. Gaiters are necessary to keep the fine volcanic scree from entering your boots and creating blisters,

We reach the rocky top of the crater rim, and the terrain becomes steeper and slow-going. The views are spectacular from here to the summit, offering close looks at the crater's sheer walls, the ash cone, Mount Kilimanjaro, and the verdant crater so far

below. The hike to the summit is slow-going due to the sandy trail conditions, potential high winds, and altitude. You will get energy snacks and hot beverages to give you more energy along the way, and be prepared to take a few breaks en route. We reach the summit by 10am, and stand in marvel at the views. There is some time to have a snack, take photos and relax before making our way back down back to Saddle Hut. The descent to Saddle Hut takes about 2-3 hours, and the temperatures can get quite hot, especially in the direct sun. You will need sun block and sunglasses, and arrange your clothing so that you can easily strip off layers to match the conditions. Once we reach Saddle Hut, we eat a big lunch, and recover before retracing our steps back to Miriakamba. This descent takes 1 – 1.5 hours. The remainder of the afternoon is for rest.

Day 6 Miriakamba Hut - Hatari Lodge (2,514m to 1,500 m)

Elevation Loss: 1,014 meters

Trekking Time: Two to three hours

We descend to Momella Gate from Miriakamba Hut. The descent is fast unless it has rained on the trail. We first pass through scrubland, then descend into the montane forest and finally into the open grassland. There is a good chance we will see wildlife on our way down. If the trail is wet, you will probably slip a few times. Be sure to have at least a walking stick, but preferably two trekking poles for the entire descent... We could also choose to descend from Miriakamba via the mountain trail. If you have bad knees, you may want to choose this option for day three and descend using the road on day four.

Once we arrive at Momella Gate, we will receive certificates for reaching the summit of Mount Meru. After thanking your national park ranger and mountain porters, we bid them farewell, and continue with the Hatari Mountain Guide another 30 minutes walk to Hatari Lodge. Upon arrival you will be greeted with a warm welcome, and some special treats to soothe weary bodies.

Diner and overnight at Hatari Lodge.

Day 7: Departure from Hatari

After a leisurely breakfast you will meet your safari guide who shall take you to your next destination in Tanzania.

For all KLM arrivals we suggest a dayroom at Hatari Lodge and possible extra activities! (The costs for dayroom and extra activities are separate!)

Price: Rack as from 2 pax:

Climbing dates: daily

Rate: 1995,00 USD

Extra costs:

Additional night at Hatari Lodge – FB without activities and park entry fees: USD 250 per person

Airport transfer: USD 120 per vehicle (min 2 people) – one way

Dayroom at Hatari including lunch & dinner: USD 125 per person

The package includes:

- * 3 nights including FB and activities at the Hatari Lodge as mentioned above
- * Canoeing on little Momella lake on the 1st day for all arrivals in time for lunch, or otherwise on day 2
- * Mt.Meru: Meals from lunch on day 1 to lunch on day 4, all park fees, hut fees, rescue fees, and eco-tourism fees, ranger fees, porter fees, English speaking guide(s), armed Ranger for security, porters to carry bags, food, fuel, and cooking

equipment, telephone contact between the mountain and the Arusha base, a stretcher in case of evacuation, any other government taxes and levies. Guides carry cell phones with extra batteries for emergency contact, and a mountain rope if needed.

The package does not include:

* international flights, airport transfer to Hatari Lodge, Visa costs, drinks at Hatari, staff tips, activities on the last day at Hatari, dayroom at Hatari and any expenses of personal nature

Price options:

* Bottled mineral water : 4 days : 12 liters per person : \$75 per person

* Personal Porter (to carry daypack of guest): \$100

Mountain Gear/packing list:

The porters shall carry your luggage of max. 12 kg however for all your personal belongings (bad-weather clothes, water bottles, photo equipment, snacks, etc...) you would need to bring your own backpack of around ca. 35 liters volume.

You need to bring the following clothes:

- 1 long sleeve synthetic shirt (cotton is to be avoided)
- 2 sweat-wicking t-shirts (not cotton)
- 1 pair of hiking shorts
- 1 pair of trekking pants
- 1 pair of fleece long underwear/ trousers
- 1 pair of leg gaiters
- 1 pair of socks per trekking day, to include 2 pair2 of lighter weight socks and 2 pairs of heavier wool/synthetic blend
- 1 pair of underwear per day
- 1 warm polartec-fleece jacket
- 1 goretex rain/wind shell
- 1 pair of goretex rain/wind pants
- 1 poncho or lightweight rain coat
- 1 pair of lightweight gloves
- 1 pair of cold weather gloves or mittens
- 1 warm hat
- 1 sun hat
- 1 pair trekking boots (medium weight, waterproof)
- 1 pair of walking/camp shoes

Other Equipment:

- 1 soft (no hard frame or wheels) duffel bag (porters will carry)
- 1 daypack
- Plastic bags of different sizes (to protect clothes against rain)
- 1 warm sleeping bag (0 degree rated Celsius (3-season))
- 2 trekking poles – highly recommended
- 1 head lamp or torch (with extra batteries and light bulb)
- 3 One-litre water bottles, or substitute with hydration pack
- Sun block. We suggest the highest possible SPF rating
- 1 pair UV-blocking sunglasses
- Water purification tablets / or filter/pump. We recommend tablets as the best and most fool-proof way to purify water.
- div. high caloried food, like chocolate,
- 2 bandanas /scarves

You must carry a medical kit. Please discuss your kit with your physician. We recommend you include the following: bandages, gauze swabs, adhesive tape, non-adhesive dressings, elasticised support bandage, safety pins, a small pair of scissors, 1 life-saving couvertelet, thermometer, tweezers, sterile alcohol wipes, sutures, antiseptic cream, antihistamine cream, and antibiotic cream.

Consult with your physician on bringing the following:

- Antihistamine tablets
- Altitude sickness tablets such as diamox and dexamethazone.
- Anti-diarrhoea tablets, as well as anti-micro fauna/flora tablets like Cipro, flagyl, etc...
- Pain killers and anti-inflammatory like Ibuprofen, aspirin, or paracetamol
- Eye drop