

KILIMANJARO



This Handbook contains everything you need to know about this classic Secret Compass [expedition to Kilimanjaro](#), the roof of Africa. Read on to discover our ethos and team-centred approach and for the nitty gritty like flight and visa advice, insurance requirements and kit recommendations.

Use the buttons below to ask questions or to apply for this team or, once approved, to secure your spot on the expedition with a Booking Form and a £400 deposit.

Key Facts

- Arrive: in Arusha by 1800 on 8 October 2017.
- Depart: any time on the 17 October 2017.
- Insurance: ensure you have comprehensive cover.
- Docs: send your [flight](#), [insurance](#) and passport copy in.
- Balance due: 90 days before departure on 8 July.
- Find Secret Compass [FAQ](#) and [Testimonials](#) online.

Overview

Aim

The aim of this classic expedition is to trek to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro (5895m) by the quiet and beautiful Northern Circuit route.

Summary

Not many mountains are as famous and evocative as Kilimanjaro. The world's largest free-standing mountain occupies a spot on many bucket lists and manages to be that rare combination of both popular and challenging.

Secret Compass's 2017 expedition team will tackle the highest summit in Africa with eight days on the mountain and via an extended route that wraps round the north of the peak. This provides quieter trekking days and more

opportunity for acclimatisation than many other ascents, all under the expert guidance of an experienced Secret Compass expedition leader.

Highlights

- Summit the highest peak in Africa, one of the Seven Summits.
- Avoid the crowds by taking the quieter Northern Circuit route.
- Experienced Secret Compass leader.
- Local expert guides and experienced porters.
- Eight days on the mountain to maximise acclimatisation.

To do

Flights

You need to organise your own international flights. We have a unique partnership with Student Universe (a specialist division of the Flight Centre Travel Group and no, you don't have to be a student to use them). The dedicated Secret Compass team understand us, our destinations and use global buying power to save you money and offer security along with a 24hour assistance helpline. Fill in a free and no-obligation [Flight Request Form](#) or call (UK) 0844 560 9799 for assistance in booking international flights.

It is advised that you book a flexible flight ticket that can be changed for a fee or refunded if the expedition dates are changed or if it is cancelled for any reason. See our [Terms and Conditions](#) for further info.

You need to be at the team hotel in Arusha by 1600 on 8 October 2017. The expedition officially ends after breakfast on 17 October 2017 although you are free to depart anytime that day (including in the early hours) as many flights depart early in the morning.

Insurance

[Insurance](#) that provides cover for emergency repatriation in case of a medical emergency is compulsory for all expeditions. You should be aware that many standard insurance policies may not cover you adequately for all aspects of a remote expedition and so we strongly recommend that you purchase a suitably designed insurance policy. Secret Compass cannot comment on the suitability of your cover so if you are in any doubt please contact your policy provider and ask them to confirm that you are covered to our minimum standard (below).

- Emergency medical repatriation (to home country) including any associated expenses abroad of at least \$500,000.
- Activities: ensure that any activities carried out on the expedition are included, these could be trekking, horse riding, rafting, MTB etc.
- Geographical region: check the geographical region you are going to is insured (often the US and Canada or countries such as Afghanistan are not insured).
- Foreign Ministry advice: check your insurance is not sensitive to any travel warnings issued by your respective foreign ministry. In the UK, many insurers will not insure you when the Foreign Office warns against travel to this area. Foreign Office advice will not necessarily mean we cancel an expedition or do not travel to a particular area. Please check @FCOtravel and [Travel Aware](#).
- Dates: make sure the period of cover begins at the departure and ends at the return to your home country. Many flights take a day or two and time zones vary. Insurance companies may prejudice your claims due to this.
- Pre-existing medical conditions: disclose this to your insurance company and to Secret Compass.

Prior to travel Secret Compass will require the name of your insurance policy provider, their 24-hour emergency contact number and your policy number. For full information on travel insurance and links to suggested companies, please visit the [Insurance](#) page in our Get Ready section.

Visas

Visas are your responsibility so please check the specific requirements for your nationality. British nationals must have a valid visa for entry to Tanzania. Visas can be arranged through the High Commission in London and cost £40 for a single-entry tourist visa (as at Jan 2017). You will require a completed application form, proof of payment, passport with at least six months remaining and two consecutive blank pages.

Passports

You should have a passport valid for the duration of the expedition and six months beyond with at least two consecutive blank pages. Please send a clear, colour copy of your passport to Secret Compass ahead of the expedition and carry photocopies with you on the expedition in a safe place. It is Tanzanian law that you must always carry photo ID with you.

Itinerary

Day 1: Oct 8 – Arusha

Make your own way to the team hotel by 1800 on 8 October for a welcome dinner and expedition briefing.

Day 2: Oct 9 – Londorossi Gate

The team will drive to Londorossi Park Gate, then onto Lemosho Glades. From here you'll start trekking along the Lemosho route and ascend to Forest Camp at 2821m. Small antelope are often sighted along this part of the route.

Day 3: Oct 10 – Kilimanjaro

Continue the trek to the edge of the Shira Plateau and Shira 1 camp. Depending on the weather conditions and team ability, there may be an additional acclimatisation walk in the afternoon to Shira Ridge, Kilimanjaro's third volcanic peak, which offers excellent views in good weather.

Day 4: Oct 11 – Kilimanjaro

Today the team will cross the Shira plateau to the Moir hut camp at 4166m. Again there is the option of a short extension walk for sunset views over the camp.

Day 5: Oct 12 – Kilimanjaro

This is a short but tough day as you follow the Northern slopes of Kilimanjaro to Pofu camp. The route stays at around 4000m which will add to the physical challenge.

Day 6: Oct 13 – Kilimanjaro

The gradual traverse of the northern circuit continues as the team trek to Third Caves camp. Again this is a short but challenging day with the goal of steady acclimatisation to the altitude.

Day 7: Oct 14 – Kilimanjaro

The ascent continues as you reach School Hut camp at 4722m. Final preparations will be made for the summit attempt before an early night.

Day 8: Oct 15 – Kilimanjaro

Waking before midnight, the summit attempt begins with a trek to Hans Meyer cave and Gilmans Point before traversing the crater rim to Uhuru Peak and the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro. After summit celebrations, the team will start to descend by the Mweka route. There are several camping options tonight depending on team progress.

Day 9: Oct 16 – Kilimanjaro

The descent continues to Mweka Gate where you'll sign the summit register and bid farewell to the local guides and porters who have supported your team. You'll then return to Arusha for showers, R&R and a celebratory dinner.

Day 10: Oct 17 – Arusha

The expedition officially ends after breakfast today although team members are free to make onwards travel arrangements at any time as many flights depart in the early hours of the morning. As before, airport transfers are the team member's responsibility.

A note on Secret Compass itineraries

Please remember that this itinerary acts as a framework plan. It provides guidance as to our intentions but will not be followed religiously. This is an adventure and by definition the outcome is uncertain. The leadership team may flex and change the plan depending on numerous frictions encountered en route. An adaptable, team-centred approach is required.

Prepare

Fitness

All our expeditions are achievable by people with an active and healthy lifestyle. However, this is an arduous expedition that will test you and at times you will be sore, tired, hungry and possibly wet! You must be prepared physically and mentally for the expedition and for living in basic conditions for the duration. Please ensure that you train for the expedition and arrive fit and ready to go. You will be required to be fit enough for the following.

- [Expedition grade](#): 270°.
- Walk: up to 20km a day.
- Carry: up to 6kg (personal day bag and water).
- Terrain: through varied terrain and volcanic scree with the possibility of ice.
- Altitude: up to 5895m
- Climate: temps from 25°C to -20°C on summit morning.

Previous experience

As long as the fitness requirements above are met, no previous experience of trekking or climbing at altitude is necessary to join this expedition. That said, team members will benefit from multi-day trekking or hill-walking practice and being used to carrying 10kg for multiple days will be necessary. This expedition maximises the time on the mountain to improve acclimatisation and to increase the chance of summit success.

Medical

Vaccinations. Please seek advice from your health professional on recommended vaccinations. The NHS website [Fit for Travel](#) and [Travel Health Pro](#) are useful.

Dental. It is strongly recommended that you have a dental check up prior to departure. Dental problems far from help are very unpleasant.

Money

The Tanzanian Shilling is the official currency although USD\$ (post 2003 notes) are widely accepted. There are ATMs in Arusha although these are often broken or out of currency so we advise bringing sufficient cash with you.

This expedition is all-inclusive so you won't need much money, perhaps for a beer in the bar and some souvenirs on the way or for (discretionary but always appreciated) tips. Tipping is a major part of the tourist industry around Kilimanjaro and your expedition leader will discuss this in the initial team briefing.

Kit list

The following is Secret Compass's recommended kit list for the 2017 expedition to Kilimanjaro. You will be required to carry a day sack with your personal equipment every day and at least three litres of water.

Discounts

Secret Compass has arranged team member discounts with Cotswold Outdoor, Nordic Life, Outdoor Hire and Expedition Kit Hire, details of these will be sent through on booking.

Baggage and sleeping

- RUCKSACK OR DUFFLE: 60-70ltr and a maximum of 15kg. All your personal gear needs to fit easily into this pack which will be carried by the porters.
- DAYSACK: 25-30ltr. This must be well-fitting and comfortable as well as large enough to fit all of your personal kit for the day including a down jacket on summit day.
- WATERPROOF RUCKSACK LINER: Sealable 'canoe' or 'dry' bags such as those made by Podsac or Ortlieb. You need a large one to line your main pack and we suggest smaller dry bags to help organise and protect your kit as well as your day bag.
- SLEEPING BAG: Rated to at least comfort -15C. Down is lighter and more compact than synthetic options but also invest in a waterproof stuff sack. If you sleep cold, invest in a liner or a warmer bag.
- FULL LENGTH SLEEPING MAT: Inflatable roll mat eg. Thermarest. Bring a repair kit.

Clothing

- LONG SLEEVE SHIRT: 2x quick drying long sleeve shirts or tops (not cotton).
- THERMAL BASE LAYERS: Top and bottom, long thermals.
- LONG TROUSERS: 2x quick drying trekking trousers.
- MID LAYER: 1x fleece or equivalent.
- DOWN JACKET: 1x down jacket for evenings and summit morning. Protect it with a dry sack
- WATERPROOF JACKET AND TROUSERS: 1x full set of waterproofs. Gore-tex or equivalent.
- GAITERS: (optional).
- WALKING BOOTS: Well-fitting and worn in ahead of the expedition.
- HIKING SOCKS: 4x hiking socks. Make sure they work with your boots.
- SANDALS: For use around camp. Not flip-flops.
- WIDE BRIMMED SUN HAT/CAP: (optional).
- WARM HAT: For evenings and summit day.
- WARM GLOVES: Bring a liner pair as well for using cameras etc.
- UNDERWEAR.

Water

- ROBUST WATER BOTTLE OR BLADDER: You need to be able to carry at least three litres of water.

Health and hygiene

- WASHBAG: Compact bag with toothbrush, toothpaste, biodegradable soap.
- TRAVEL TOWEL/SARONG: (Optional).
- WET WIPES.
- ANTIBACTERIAL HAND GEL: Enough for the entire trip.
- SUNCREAM AND LIP SALVE: Factor 30+.
- VASELINE: Keep this handy to help prevent chafing and blisters.

Small First Aid Kit

A team medical kit with a comprehensive primary care provision will be carried. For your personal med kit:

- A WATERPROOF BAG OR TUPPERWARE BOX: Keep kit dry and safe.
- PAINKILLERS: Ibuprofen and paracetamol.
- ZING OXIDE TAPE AND SMALL SCISSORS.
- MELOLIN DRESSING PADS x4.
- 2 x CREPE BANDAGE.
- COMPEED BLISTER PADS: Please note that Compeed produce several similar looking blister packs for corns, etc. Please ensure you purchase the standard/original item.
- DIAHORREA TABLETS: Imodium.
- DIORALYTE SACHETS: Or similar rehydration packs.
- ANTISEPTIC WIPES.
- ANTISEPTIC CREAM.
- PIRITON TABLETS: For allergies.
- EURAX CREAM: For bites.
- ANY MEDICATION YOU NORMALLY USE: Find out the generic/chemical name for your medication in case you need to source more in-country. Please also check that your medication is legal in your destination. You MUST make Secret Compass aware of any medical conditions before you travel.

Other

- TREKKING POLES (Optional): Many team members find trekking poles useful on slippery or uneven terrain or for steep descents.
- WATCH.
- HEAD TORCH AND SPARE BATTERIES: Petzl Tikka head torch or equivalent.
- SUNGLASSES: With UV-filter lenses.
- PENKNIFE: Don't pack in your hand luggage.
- GAFFA TAPE: For emergency repairs to your kit, you can take some off the roll and wrap it around something else in your kit.
- 1 x KARABINER: Generally useful to have.
- SPARE BOOT LACES.
- SMALL SEWING KIT.
- RE-SEALABLE PLASTIC BAGS: For dirty washing, wrappings etc.

Approach

Our approach

Secret Compass organises expeditions, not sightseeing tours. Our expeditions are team-centred, flexible and dynamic. Teams are managed on the ground by Secret Compass staff: industry-leading professionals and guides of the highest calibre. They put the structure in place for your team to have an incredible experience while achieving your expedition's aims. Our people are as passionate as you are about achieving the extraordinary in the world's wildest places. Secret Compass teams often go to places that others don't. This makes our expeditions truly different, taking you beneath the skin and beyond the headlines of the world's most remote reaches. Inspired by history's great explorers and challenges, you'll be set ambitious goals and will overcome similar hardships to those experienced on the audacious journeys of the past.

Remember this is not an organised tour. It is an adventure. More often than not expeditions don't run smoothly! The nature of the areas we operate in mean that we will encounter a number of challenges that we expect everyone to meet and relish. Friction and hurdles are all part and parcel of an arduous expedition and also to our success as a team. These make the journey more interesting and are often the best and most amusing parts when looking back. Each expedition is thoroughly reviewed on its return and team members will have the opportunity to provide feedback which helps to inform planning for future expeditions.

Local partners and bureaucracy

Our teammates can only achieve the extraordinary with the help of people in the communities we travel through. NGO and aid workers, guides, fixers and interpreters all work extremely hard and are generous in their hospitality to us and our teams: visitors in their land. They are crucial to our success. Please remember and respect that their perspectives and concepts of time, environmental responsibility and customer service might differ to yours. Occasionally there is no established protocol for outside visitors which means we encounter local power struggles or disagreements. Our leaders have years of experience in delicate negotiations like these and conversational chess – especially through an interpreter – and these interchanges are often memorable parts of any expedition.

Infrastructure and natural events

The areas we travel to often especially remote. Transport infrastructure can be ageing, inadequate or non-existent. Flooded roads, collapsed bridges, fallen trees and vehicle break-downs are all par for the course. Our teams thrive on overcoming challenges like these – be prepared to get stuck in and push occasionally! Natural phenomena like desert sand storms, early monsoons, landslides across key routes, winter coming early, gale force winds and driving snow can all make for a more interesting time on the expedition.

Food

In some areas our teams explore, we rely on local food sources. This can often be outstanding (but can also be very average) and we always make the best out of the resources available. In other cases, we will supply filling and high-calorie dehydrated expedition foods (ration packs)

Part of a team

Secret Compass fosters a team mentality across all its expeditions and projects. Like all teams you will have a leader who will give direction to your progress. Crucial to your team's success – especially when the going gets tough – is the attitude of the teammates working together to achieve the aim. You really are part of a team, not a cosseted guest on a tour. We ask teammates to muck in and help out any aspect of the expedition, from fetching water and helping to prepare and cook food, to carrying some group kit and equipment if required. The working language of all teams is English.

Typical teammates

There really is no typical expedition member, though everyone needs to be fit, healthy and ready to take on the expedition's aim by the time of departure. Participants range from 21 to 65+ in age and come from all over the world. Backgrounds include contract workers and engineers, IT specialists and students, teachers and literature lovers, journalists and keen photographers and so many more. What bonds our pioneering teams is their shared spirit of adventure and their sense of humour and positive outlook. A good teammate looks on the bright side when the 4x4 breaks down, the rain comes early and when a meal is distinctly pedestrian. Our teammates help each other, look out for each, encourage each other and help each other when needed. Our teams have done us proud in working together to achieve their common goal: the aim of the expedition. If this sounds like you, you've come to the right expedition company.

Teammate mentality

You need a robust, spirited and can-do attitude to cope with demanding days and rough camping in rugged and

wild places. You'll cover good daily distances (generally carrying your own kit and equipment), eating expedition foods or relying on local food sources. These elements combine to create the unique character of each expedition. On expedition, challenges, frictions and changes to plans are inevitable. Teammates should meet and relish these as an integral part of any arduous expedition and its ultimate success. Such things make the journey more interesting and are often most memorable parts when looking back.

Risk management

Secret Compass is an expedition company not a tour company. Expeditions contain inherent risk. This is part of the appeal for teammates. We do not make expeditions safe as, by definition, that is impossible. We construct and implement a three-staged risk management approach to reduce risk to what we perceive as a tolerable level.

1. Risk assessment.

We conduct a thorough risk assessment of potential hazards and threats that may be encountered on the expedition and provide recommendations to reduce the likelihood of harm occurring/ severity if it does occur.

2. Safety plan.

As part of our expedition plan, we detail actions to be taken to implement and resource the recommendations of the risk assessment. This includes a detailed medical and communications plan.

3. Delivery.

The expedition leader is responsible for dynamic risk management on the expedition itself.

Key risks.

Key risks encountered on this specific expedition include altitude, accidents (e.g. slips, trips or falls) whilst trekking over uneven terrain. If you would like to see the full Risk Assessment for this expedition, please email info@secretcompass.com

Incident management and medical

As part of the safety plan, Secret Compass has a full incident and emergency plan for medical and other emergencies. This will be discussed in full at the arrival brief, so everyone is aware what action will be taken. In summary, incidences are usually managed on the ground by the expedition leader in the first instance with remote support from Secret Compass's 24 hour Operations Room before evacuation to the nearest appropriate medical centre.

Informed consent

It is your responsibility to understand the risks associated with adventure travel in remote areas. You also must understand that medical evacuation will take an extended period of time (potentially up to two days) and will require wilderness extraction techniques and long carries by stretcher. In-country search and rescue and emergency services are very basic or non-existent and the expedition will rely on internal resources for medical evacuation. By joining this expedition, you accept the risks associated with the venture. If you require any more information on specific risk management for this expedition, or would like to speak to us about our medical planning prior to the trip, please get in touch.

Testimonials

Read team [Testimonials](#) or watch this short video featuring expedition teammates (filmed on location in Ethiopia) for an insight into life on expedition.

On exped

Cultural

Team members should be considerate of local cultures, disrespect, particularly towards older people, will cause offence. Homosexuality is illegal. Attempting to remove flora or fauna, including shells and jewellery is illegal without a license.

Terrain

This expedition will cover a variety of terrain from forest trails, mountain plateaus and volcanic scree to gravel and mountain ridges. The team won't be covering vast distances each day but the expedition will be made more challenging by the altitude.

Weather

October is a great time to trek on Kilimanjaro before the heavy rains start in November. The route encompasses several different vegetation zones and can see temperature ranges as great as from 25°C to -20°C.

Transport

Kilimanjaro Airport is located about 50km from Arusha and is well served by international flights. There are regular shuttles from the airport to Arusha as well as taxis. Another option is to travel overland from Nairobi to Arusha by bus. Travel to and from Arusha at the start and end of the itinerary is the responsibility of each team member. During the expedition, the team will use minibuses and 4WD vehicles to access the national park with the rest of the itinerary completed on foot.

Accommodation

The team will stay in a comfortable hotel in Arusha at the start and end of the expedition. Rooms will be on a twin-share basis and the hotel will be able to store any luggage which isn't required for the expedition. Any extra nights outside of the Secret Compass itinerary can be booked directly with the hotel if required. While on the mountain, the team will be camping in technical mountain tents provided by Secret Compass and shared between two people.

Food

In towns, the team will eat well in the hotel restaurant. Whilst on the mountain, there will be a combination of freshly prepared meals, packed lunches and dehydrated expedition rations. Dietary requirements can usually be catered for but should be discussed with Secret Compass in advance. It is recommended that you bring a favourite snack or cereal bar for each expedition day as a morale boost.

Porters

This expedition will be supported by porters who will carry up to a maximum of 15kg of your personal gear. You will be required to carry your personal kit for each full day's trekking plus at least three litres of water per day.

Communications

Secret Compass staff will be carrying at least two methods of communication, usually a Satellite Phone and a DeLorme two-way communication device. These will be used for regular updates to head office and for emergencies.

Unfortunately, routine communication between team members and family/friends is not possible – please reassure them that no news is good news! If there is an emergency and someone needs to contact a team member, they can contact Secret Compass's Operations Room on +44207 096 8428 who will endeavour to pass a message on

within 24hours.

Cell Phone. Your mobile roaming will work in Arusha but you are unlikely to get signal while on the mountain.

Exped FAQ

Frequently asked questions that are specific to this expedition will get added here as we start to receive them. Meanwhile, read our [general FAQ](#) for questions such as 'how do I join an expedition' and more. Can't find your answer? Contact SCHQ.