

CLIMBING MOUNT KENYA: IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OL PEJETA BUSH CAMP

Mount Kenya is the highest peak in Kenya and second highest in Africa after Kilimanjaro in neighbouring Tanzania. It was awarded UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 1997. Reaching heights of 17,057 ft (5198 metres) it has three peaks, Batian, Nelion and Point Lenana, which are the remnants of an ancient volcano and take their names from the paramount Maasai chiefs.

Reaching the highest of the three peaks on Mount Kenya requires a lot of technical expertise, but the third highest peak Point Lenana, offers arguably the finest five or six day trek on the continent. Trek through dense rainforest on the lower slopes where you may encounter elephant, or even leopard, before traversing vast moorlands and past deep rocky gorges. From the summit of Lenana you will be rewarded with views across East Africa, the experience heightened by the fact that there are few other trekkers to share the mountain with – Mt Kenya has +/- 4000 trekkers per year, vs. Mt Kilimanjaro which has 50,000+ per year.

The summits of Batian and Nelion are surrounded by glaciers and often covered in snow where the night time temperature can drop to below -10 degrees Celsius. At any time of the year harsh, cold, wet and windy weather can come from anywhere so it's essential to be prepared.



The Team

You can choose from a professional Kenyan climb crew to lead your expedition, and have the option to add private guide Alex Hunter to lead the crew. Having Alex as your guide makes the experience more like a walking safari, more interactive and learning about the flora and fauna you encounter along the way. Alex has ascended the mountain numerous times and is well acquainted with the best routes along the way and has a relaxed and humorous approach combined with a deep understanding of and close rapport with his team. Whichever you choose, you can be assured of an experienced and enthusiastic team who knows this mountain like the back of their hands.

Routes

We offer two routes – Chogoria and Timau – which lead you through varied ecosystems, starting with the dense rainforest on the lower slopes, through the bamboo belt and traversing across the vast moorlands. In our opinion, the Chogoria route which is a day longer is one of the greatest treks in the world, and takes in some of the scenic highlights of the mountain including the glacial valley near The Temple.

The Point Lenana ascent is either early, setting off as dawn breaks over Africa, or in the afternoon the previous day depending on the group's progress and weather conditions. You can see the nearby peaks of Nelion and Batian glinting in the sun and on a clear day it's possible to see the summit of Kilimanjaro 350kms away.

Duration

Choose from a 5 day/4 night trek on the Timau route or a 6 day/5 night trek on the Chogoria route – both to the summit of Point Lenana at 16,355 ft (4985m). Full day-to-day details on the following pages.

Prices

Please contact our reservations team for an accurate quotation bearing in mind seasons and number of people in the group. However, as a guideline, here are some sample costs, based on high season 2019 travel. Prices are NETT and based on 4 people:

Choguria Route

\$3105 pp with Alex Hunter leading, or with only the local team \$1980 pp

Timau Route

\$2760 pp with Alex Hunter leading, or with only the local team \$1760 pp

Price includes - Full board throughout on the trek, tents, porters, park fees (\$280 pp), local guide, transfers from Ol Pejeta Bush Camp and from Sirimon to Nanyuki on the descent, VAT.

Excludes – Pre-climb night at Ol Pejeta Bush Camp, sleeping bag and karrimat (hire can be arranged but the kit available is not to the highest standard so we recommend bringing your own). For tips we recommend you budget \$20 per person per day which will be shared amongst the crew.



Accommodation

You will stay in a combination of campsites and park bandas – both are simple but comfortable and your climb crew are there to ensure every need is catered for, including a cook to prepare fresh meals throughout your climb. All tents and camping equipment is carried up the mountain by the porters and we use high quality Mountain Hardware tents which we consider to be the best. The tents themselves are officially 2-man tents but experience with trekkers show these can be a bit snug even for a married couple, so we offer the option of a single tent for just \$100 pp (total) supplement – we think it's worth it for the extra space! There is also a loo tent and dining tent.

The campsites themselves are some of the most impressive in Kenya – next to lakes and gorges, mountain streams and glacial moraines.

Logistics

Climbers must spend the night prior to the climb at Ol Pejeta Bush Camp (not included in cost) to have a pre-climb briefing with the team, check equipment and talk through any concerns or last-minute questions. Transfers are included to the start of the trek. If you wish to spend longer and have a few days on safari pre- or post-climb we warmly welcome you at Ol Pejeta Bush Camp!

At the end of your climb you will be transferred to Nanyuki airport for your onward flight to Nairobi, the Masai Mara or elsewhere, or can continue your safari in the local area.

This is a fully serviced trek – so your tents are set up by the team, all meals are cooked, and your overnight gear is carried by porters – so all you need to do is carry your day pack.

Seasons

The trek to Pt Lenana can be climbed at any time of the year – the optimum months are Jan, Feb to mid March, July, August, September, October & December; November, April, May and June can be wet - as can any time of year.

Flora and fauna

The varied topography on the mountain is home to a wide range of birdlife and plants, some of which are other-worldly such as the giant lobelia which have adapted especially to the mountain conditions. Trekkers should keep a look out for Augur buzzards, Verreaux eagles and the rare Tacazze sunbird.



THE ULTIMATE MOUNT KENYA – WITH LAKE RUTUNDU EXTENSION

For the very best experience of all Mount Kenya has to offer, it simply doesn't get better than extending the Chogoria route trek with a couple of nights at the charming Rutundu cabins up the mountain, next to Lake Rutundu. It's the perfect spot to unwind when you come off the mountain and enjoy a couple of days of total privacy in what many consider to be one of the most special places in East Africa.



How it works: Towards the end of the Chogoria route trek, we collect you by helicopter on day 5 of the trek, rather than day 6 – making the trek one day shorter. Please note if there is bad weather on the mountain it can be too risky for the helicopter to do a pick-up – in this case we would arrange a road transfer and refund the difference in cost. We provide meals and drinks and logistics to make this stay superbly comfortable, and there is a minimum stay of two nights at the Rutundu cabins to ensure you maximise the experience. A cook and room attendant will be there to look after you during your stay. At the end you will be driven down to Nanyuki for your journey onward or home.

Costs: \$700 pp based on four travelling excluding the helicopter flight (\$5000 nett total for four passengers for one-way flight) – includes full board, park fees, road transfer to Nanyuki, and selected drinks (soft drinks, beer, local spirits, house wine – a premium alcohol price list is available if you want champagne, premium Scotch whisky etc.)

Activities from Rutundu include spectacular hiking and fishing on Lake Rutundu and Lake Alice (please advise in advance if you need to hire fishing rods and other equipment) and of course plentiful walking opportunities, if your legs have the energy after your Mt Kenya trek. This without doubt is one of the most unique and amazing locations in East Africa.



CHOGORIA ROUTE: 6 days / 5 nights

Day 1.

Nanyuki or camp to Chogoria Bandas

Length: 4km Time: 2-3 hours Ascent: 300m

Accommodation: Chogoria Bandas (3000m)

Meet guides and porters at a little local hotel at around midday, enjoying a picnic lunch in the forest while the crew load up the landrover (a slightly weathered vehicle but serves the purpose of getting you to the trailhead). We have a 22 km drive up a rough and muddy track through the bamboo zone to our overnight destination on the boundary of the park, walking the last 5-8 kms to the bandas to start to acclimatize. We overnight at the Chogoria Bandas (a small bunkhouse) set near the edge of the forest line and if time allows we will do a late afternoon stroll from the bandas once we are set up.

Day 2.

Chogoria bandas to Lake Ellis

Length: 7km Time: 5 hours Ascent: 600m

Accommodation: Lake Ellis camp (3400m)

After breakfast, we will follow the track as it leads up through glades of montane forest, with plenty of wildlife around, to our camp on the shores of Lake Ellis. We will arrive at our camp after about three hours walk in time for lunch. After a short rest period in the late afternoon we will hike to the top of nearby Mugi hill (250 m) for spectacular views and a picnic lunch, before returning to camp at dusk.



Day 3.

Lake Ellis to Lake Michaelson

Length: 12km Time: 7 hours Ascent: 800m

Accommodation: Lake Michaelson Camp (4000m)

In the early morning we set off, climbing away from Lake Ellis on its west side, across moorland to a ridge which eventually joins the main Chogoria trail. We have views of Vivienne Falls and the Gorges Valley as we descend to the most picturesque campsite in the range, at Lake Michaelson. Above the camp are the impressive cliffs of the "Temple" – a scenic highlight of the mountain. Exotic bird species, including the Tacazze sunbird, can be seen close to the camp amongst the bizarre giant plants - principally groundsel and lobelia. Lake Michaelson is the most impressive campsite on the mountain with the Nithi gorge plunging nearly 400m into the lake.

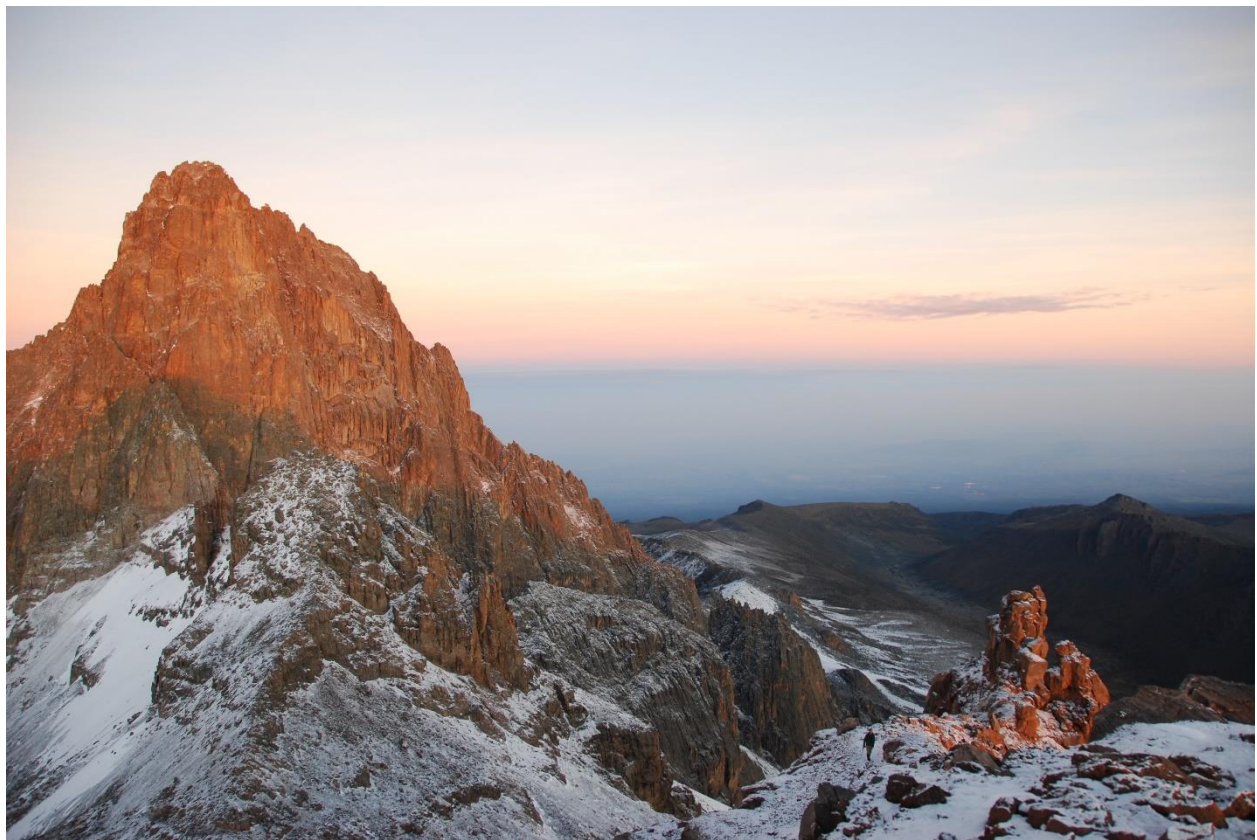
Day 4.

Lake Michaelson to Simba Tarn

Length: 7km Time: 4-5 hours Ascent: 600m

Accommodation: Simba Tarn Camp (4600m)

Climbing away from the beautiful Lake Michaelson we ascend into the alpine zone - a world of rock and ice as we ascend towards the main peaks, leaving behind the bizarre giant lobelias and groundsels and onto glacial moraine. A last short sharp scree slope takes us to Simba Tarn. (4620m) where we overnight. If the group is moving at a decent pace, and weather conditions are favourable, it is also possible to ascend Pt Lenana this afternoon, making the final day an easier one. This is decided on the day with the group and guide.



Day 5.

Simba Tarn via Point Lenana to Liki North (4000m).

Length: 16km Time: 9 hours Ascent: 385m Descent: 985m

Accommodation: Liki North Camp (4000m)

An early start (at around 5 a.m.) for a cup of tea and a relatively easy 2-hour climb up to Point Lenana the trekking summit (4,985m). As dawn breaks over Africa, we are treated to a remarkable spectacle - the nearby peaks of Nelion and Batian glinting in the morning sun. In the far distance, if clear, it is possible to see the summit of Kilimanjaro 350kms away.

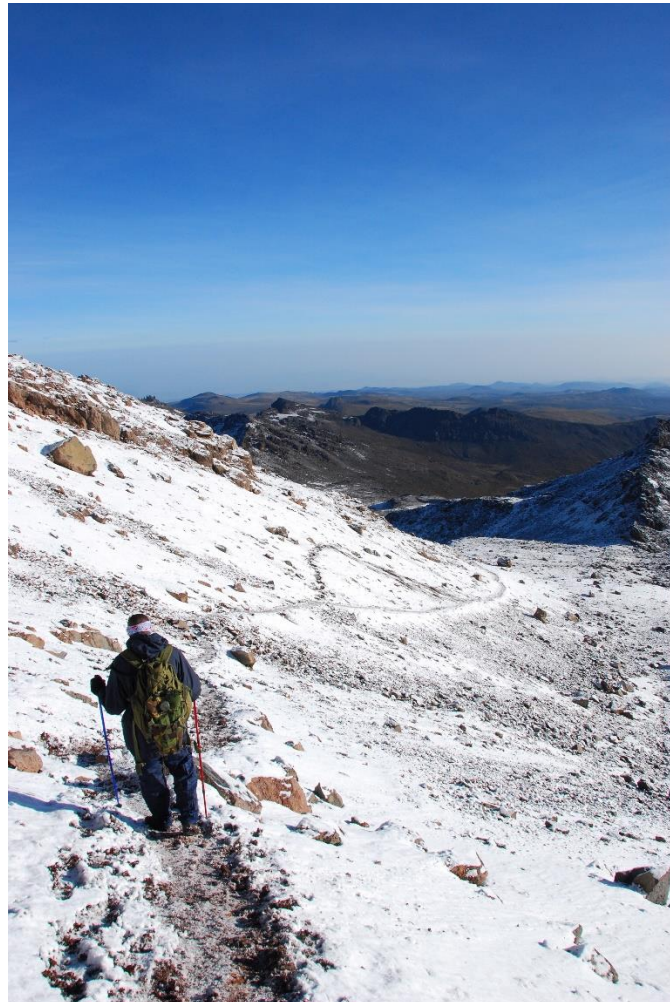
After spending some time basking in the morning sunlight absorbing the panorama, we return to Simba Tarn campsite for a celebratory cooked breakfast. Descend down the pleasant Mackinder Valley in the shadow of the true summit of Batian, and near the end of the day's trek we fork right from the main trail and drop into the Liki North valley(4000m) and our camp near the little hut there. The descent takes about 4- 5 hours. Alternatively, depending on the group we overnight tonight at Old Moses or Road Head which is closer to the park gate and offers climbers a much shorter walk on the final day and means they can be at their safari camp nearby, or next location by lunchtime.

Day 6

Liki North to Park gate.

Length: 9km Time: 4-6 hours Descent: 2000m

Descending off the mountain is around 2-3 hours walking which can be boggy underfoot to Old Moses camp at the treeline and the roadhead. It is a further 2-3 hours walk down the road in podo and cedar forest. We arrive at the park gate arriving around lunchtime where we meet our awaiting vehicles and bid goodbye to our guides and porters.



TIMAU ROUTE: 5 days / 4 nights

Day 1

Wangu to West Marania Roadhead

Length: 12km Time: 6 hours Ascent: 700m

Accommodation: West Marania campsite (3000m)

Today we walk leisurely through Hagenia forests and stunning giant Heather woodland to the West Marania roadhead. We walk slowly to acclimatise to the altitude. The route is open heathland and we have the chance of seeing some unique mountain wildlife. One thing we are unlikely to see is another group as we are now definitely off the main track. We arrive at our stunning mountain stream campsite and relax in the beauty of the mountain.



Day 2

West Marania Roadhead to Majors Camp

Length: 8km Time: 6-8 hours Ascent: 500m

Accommodation: Majors camp (3800m)

A long day's easy walk to explore this pristine mountain area, we trek through open moorland with views of the main peaks. We have a picnic enroute, arriving into camp around tea time.

Day 3

Majors Camp to Simba Tarn Camp

Length: 12km Time: 6 hours Ascent: 800m

Accommodation: Simba Tarn (4600m)

A great day that sees us finish at the base of the old volcanic plug that makes up the rocky peaks of Batian, Nelion and Pt. Lenana. On the trek up, the vegetation changes to moorland grass with small flowering plants and the amazing giant lobelias and senecios. If the weather permits and the group is feeling strong, we sometimes summit Pt Lenana this afternoon, returning to Simba Tarn Camp for the night. This makes for a long day today but an easier final couple of days, and is decided upon by the guide and the group on the day.

Day 4

Simba Tarn to Pt. Lenana (4985m) to Old Moses Campsite

Length: 18km Time: 15 hours

Ascent: 385m Descent: 2135m

An early 5.00am start sees us on the Summit Circuit Path. Stunning views, tarns, glaciers, ice carved rock formations and precipitous valleys and the views... We are in search of Pt. Lenana for a sunrise celebration with spectacular views to the Aberdare Ranges and even Mt. Kilimanjaro. After a celebratory cup of tea or coffee we start our descent via the Summit Circuit to Old Moses camp for a well-earned rest.

Day 5

Old Moses Campsite to Sirimon Park Gate

Length: 9km

Time: 2 hours Descent: 675m

A gentle walk to the park gate where you are collected by your vehicles at around 11.00am and say our goodbyes to the climb crew and porters.

