RCOG Trek Mount Kilimanjaro Challenge

22nd – 31st January 2016

Thank you for your interest in our RCOG Trek Mount Kilimanjaro Challenge January 2016 to raise money for the RCOG’s global health work.

We understand that embarking on this challenge is a massive endeavour and one that will test you both physically and mentally, as well as providing you with the experience of a lifetime and the chance to contribute to the RCOG’s life changing global health work.

This document is designed as a guide to tell you what you can expect from the challenge.

We will be here to support you throughout your challenge whether that be with fundraising, guidance on health and fitness or moral support, you can contact Nia in the Development Team at any time on nsheppard@rcog.org.uk or on 020 7772 6477.

Trip Highlights

- Climbing to the Breath-taking Summit of Kilimanjaro - The World's Highest free-standing Mountain!
- Second Cave (3450m) with superb views of Kibo Mawenzi Tarn (4330m) situated in a cirque beneath the spires of Mawenzi
- Walking through forest to catch a glimpse of the Kilimanjaro Colobus Monkeys
- Visiting Tanzania, one of Africa’s most colourful and popular destinations
- Raising funds and awareness for the great work being done by the RCOG
How your help will make a difference

Our map shows the breadth of our work across the world, with long-established commitment to education and training. The key areas of current activity reflect the highest level of global need: Africa, South Asia and Eastern Europe.

The money you raise from taking part in this amazing challenge will go directly to the Global Health Work of the RCOG so that we can continue to send volunteer obstetricians and gynaecologists to under-resourced countries, continue to develop training courses to train health workers in developing countries and, most importantly, continue to improve the lives of women and their children globally.

RCOG Volunteer: Dr Rachel Ion, RCOG/Uganda Maternal Hub volunteer in Uganda 2012.

“We made this model out of a shoebox, a margarine tub and a coca cola bottle. The next day we were using it to teach some nursing students when we were called away to a patient. When we returned one of the newly qualified midwives was using it to teach the nursing students herself. That was definitely a highlight – after all the whole point of us being there was to give the Ugandans the tools to teach themselves, and each other.”
Case Study: A day in the life of Sister Sarah

Sister Sarah Mampewo is the midwife-in-charge at Kasangati Health Centre. She is one of three qualified midwives at a centre that on an average day delivers six babies, holds an antenatal clinic for around 40 women and a postnatal clinic for 40 more.

On the day we visited we watched Sarah’s day unfold. It started late. Usually the waiting areas would be full by 9am but torrential rain was making it hard for the women to reach the clinic. Around 10.30 the rain cleared and the women started to arrive.

By 11.30 Sister Sarah had called the Doctor to examine a suspected obstructed labour. Within a few minutes he had taken the decision to conduct an emergency Caesarean section. Sarah was scrubbing up to support him in surgery.

Through the window of the theatre we watched the baby being lifted from its mother. That was 1.15. It was a long minute or two before we heard its angry cry. We later found out that his mother, Violet, had been in labour for so long that the baby had become distressed and Sarah had needed to resuscitate him.

Afterwards she told us that it was training from RCOG volunteers that had given her the confidence to undertake these procedures in stressful circumstances: “At first you could be quaking, you could have a tremor when you are thinking how you will get the baby up. We had the fear of pushing the tube deeper to get all the secretions out and because the baby remains flat we could think the baby is dead and we delay giving oxygen. The volunteers taught us that when you get an asphyxiated baby just be confident.”

RCOG Volunteer: Dr Mary McCauley MRCOG, RCOG/VSO volunteer in Ethiopia 2012

“The major causes of maternal death in Ethiopia are obstructed labour, ruptured uterus, severe pre-eclampsia, sepsis, and miscarriage complications. All of these conditions are potentially preventable with the provision of correct and timely clinical care. Working in this specialty in the second poorest country in our world is extremely tough. That’s why I’m here.”
Who organises the challenge?

The challenge is organised for the RCOG by World Expeditions – one of the world’s leading adventure travel companies operating since 1975. They are well respected in the charity sector having organised bespoke trips for organisations ranging from international agencies to national charities, as well as many smaller local charitable causes and schools.

World Expeditions are committed to responsible travel and are widely recognized for their ground breaking Responsible Tourism initiatives. In particular, the award winning Community Project Travel Program helps to improve the living conditions of some of the world’s most remote communities.

World Expeditions are 100% compliant with safety standard BS8848 and their UK base has a 24 hour emergency number. They are ATOL bonded (#4491) and protected by International Public Liability insurance. World Expeditions is ATOL Protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (ATOL 4491).

The itinerary at a glance

DAY 1 LONDON - MARANGU
DAY 2 COMMENCE CLimb (ALTITUDE 2600M, 3-4 HRS) CAMP RONGAI 1
DAY 3 CLIMB TO SECOND CAVE (ALTITUDE 3450M, 3-4 HRS)
DAY 4 KIKELEWA CAVES (ALTITUDE 3600M, 3-4 HRS)
DAY 5 MAWENZI TARN (ALTITUDE 4330M, 3-4 HRS)
DAY 6 WALK TO KIBO (ALTITUDE 4700M, 5-6 HRS)
DAY 7 SUMMIT (ALTITUDE 5896M) AND DESCEND TO HOROMBO HUT 11-15HRS
DAY 8 DESCEND TO MARANGU (APPROX 5-6 HOURS)
DAY 9 TRANSFER TO KILIMANJARO AIRPORT
DAY 10 ARRIVE UK
The challenge

The sight of the permanent snow-capped peak of Mt Kilimanjaro (5895m) provides a constant source of inspiration when viewed from the vast plains. It is also a natural focus for any fit trekker keen to summit the highest peak in Africa. While the ascent does not require any technical climbing, the trails are demanding and a sound level of fitness and an ability to acclimatise are essential prerequisites before attempting the summit. The Rongai Route begins in attractive farming lands and forests, with the opportunity for viewing black and white colobus monkeys along the way. The route then passes through several different climate zones, adding considerably to the interest of the trek while at the same time ensuring maximum acclimatisation. This route retains a sense of unspoilt wilderness and offers a different perspective on Kilimanjaro by approaching it from the north. From the alluring summit of Uhuru Peak (5895m), we will have amazing 360 degree views of the surrounding plains.

What’s included:

- International Return Flights from London
- Airport transfers by private vehicle
- 2 nights of accommodation in hotel in Marangu on twin share basis
- 8 breakfasts, 7 lunches and 8 dinners
- English speaking local leader
- Experienced mountain guides, cook and porters
- All group camping and catering equipment on the climb including foam sleeping mats (sleeping bags are not provided)
- Park entrance fees approx. US$820pp
- Medical Kit
- Internal transport in private vehicle

What’s not included:

- Sleeping bags and kit bags
- Aerated and alcoholic drinks
- Tips
- Airport and departure taxes
- Visas where applicable
- Travel Insurance
- Single supplements
- Items of a personal nature such as phone calls, laundry, etc.
**Detailed itinerary**

**DAY 1 London - Marangu**

We will meet this morning at the airport for our group flight to Tanzania. Upon arrival at Kilimanjaro International Airport (JRO) we will be met by our World Expedition Trekking representatives and transferred to the pretty village of Marangu. We will be staying at the Kilimanjaro Mountain Resort, which is beautifully located on the lower slopes of Kilimanjaro and is a perfect place to prepare for your adventure. Complete with a pool and bar, you can relax on this first evening and enjoy dinner together to discuss the upcoming challenge. We will need a good night’s sleep as the trek begins tomorrow at dawn... Meals: D

**DAY 2 Commence Climb (Altitude 2600m, 3-4 hrs) Camp Rongai 1**

After breakfast we will begin completing the necessary registration formalities at Marangu National Park gate and then transfer by Landrovers to Rongai and the start of our challenge. The climb begins from the attractive wooden village of Nale Moru (1950m) on a small path that winds through fields of maize and potatoes before entering pine forest. The track then starts to climb consistently but gently through woodland that shelters a variety of wildlife, including the beautiful Kilimanjaro Colobus monkey. These monkeys are black with a long ‘cape’ of white hair and a flowing white tail. After a while the forest begins to thin out and our first camp is at the edge of the moorland zone (2600m) with extensive views over the Kenyan plains. Meals: B,L,D

**DAY 3 Climb to Second Cave (Altitude 3450m, 3-4 hrs)**

After another hearty breakfast and sunrise at the base of the mountain, we will enjoy a morning walk up to tonight’s campsite at ‘Second Cave’ (3,450 m). The walk is a steady ascent with superb views of Kibo and the Eastern icefields on the crater rim. The afternoon can be spent relaxing at camp and enjoying the view over the Kenyan plains or completing a short acclimatisation walk up towards Third Cave. [3-4 hours walking]. Meals: B,L,D

**DAY 4 Kikelewa Caves (Altitude 3600m, 3-4 hrs)**

We now leave the main trail and strike out across the moorland on a smaller path towards the jagged peaks of Mawenzi. Our campsite is in a sheltered valley with giant and curious looking senecio plants near Kikelewa Caves (3.600 m) After lunch, there is time to explore the valley or to rest. [3-4 hours walking]. Meals: B,L,D

**DAY 5 Mawenzi Tarn (Altitude 4330m, 3-4 hrs)**

After another camp breakfast and a team talk, we will take a short but steep climb up grassy slopes to be rewarded by superb all-round views and a genuine sense of African wilderness. Today we will start to leave the vegetation behind as we ascend higher up the mountain where the air is much thinner, to our next camp at Mawenzi Tarn (4330m), spectacularly situated in a cirque directly beneath the towering spires of Mawenzi. Meals: B,L,D
**DAY 6 Walk to Kibo (Altitude 4700m, 5-6 hrs)**

Today we cross the lunar-like desert of the ‘Saddle’ between Mawenzi and Kibo to reach Kibo campsite at (4700m) situated at the bottom of the Kibo crater wall. We will take our time as the oxygen levels begin to reduce the higher we get. The remainder of the day is spent resting and getting some previous sleep for tomorrow’s big day... night. Meals: B,L,D

**DAY 7 Summit (Altitude 5896m) and descend to Horombo Hut 11-15hrs**

We will start the final, and by far the steepest and most demanding part of the climb by torchlight around 1am. We will walk very slowly in the darkness on a switchback trail through loose volcanic scree to reach the crater rim at Gillman’s Point (5685m). We will rest here for a short time to enjoy the spectacular sunrise over Mawenzi. Those who are still feeling strong can make the three hour round trip to Uhuru Peak (5896m); passing close to the spectacular glaciers and ice cliffs that still occupy most of the summit area. Congratulations! We will now be standing on the roof of Africa! All those months of fundraising, training and planning have paid off for this moment, staring out into the clouds, almost 6km above sea level. The descent to Kibo (4700m) is surprisingly fast and, after some refreshment, we will continue the descent to reach our final campsite at Horombo (3720m). Today’s trekking involves from 11 to 15 hours walking which is made to feel more strenuous by the effects of altitude and extreme cold. This section of the trek is one of the steepest and most demanding and should not be taken lightly. It is a great idea to have your own head torch so that your hands are free for balance. Most people are surprised by the extreme cold and the best advice is to follow the clothing list and pack your warm clothes. Meals: B,L,D

**DAY 8 Descend to Marangu (approx 5-6 hours)**

After our exertions and successes yesterday, we still have to get off the mountain. A steady descent takes us down through moorland to Mandara Hut (2700m); we then continue descending through lovely lush forest on a steady path to the National Park gate at Marangu (1830 m). We will spend the evening, (hopefully with our feet in the pool and a beer in our hand), talking about our challenge and enjoying a celebratory meal together. Meals: B,L,D

**DAY 9 Transfer to Kilimanjaro Airport**

This morning we will have free time to unwind, have a swim and check out of the hotel. Later today, depending on the time of our international flight, we will transfer back to JRO airport for our flight back to the UK and the end of our adventure. Meals: B

**DAY 10 Arrive UK**

We will arrive back into the UK early this morning after our overnight flight. Meals: NIL

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.
FAQs

Who can take part?
You must be 18 years old or over to take part. World Experiences have assisted people of all ages and fitness levels journey to every continent on earth.

How fit do I have to be?
This trek is an extreme challenge. All of our treks are designed to suit people who are fit and have trained to take part – the fitter you are the more you will enjoy the adventure. The challenge has some steep sections, with altitudes up to 5,898 metres above sea level.

Will I need specialist kit?
We will send you a recommended packing list in your welcome pack which will detail any equipment you may need.

What food and drink will there be?
All the water on the trek will be boiled and safe to drink. All meals are provided on the trek and will include lots of carbohydrates such as pasta and potatoes, along with cereals, bread, fresh fruit, vegetables and eggs plus some meat.

There will be vegetarian options at every meal. Please let us know in advance of any special dietary requirements.

What type of vaccinations will I need?
As a guide, yellow fever, typhoid, diphtheria and hepatitis A vaccinations are advisable along with anti-malarial protection. Your tetanus and polio vaccinations should be up to date. We recommend you seek advice from your GP before you travel.

How will I be supported?
Beforehand: You will be sent a fundraising guide from the RCOG with great tips on how to meet your sponsorship target. You will also be sent a training guide, as well as the necessary medical forms and pre-departure information. We will be in touch regularly and will organise a briefing day at the RCOG where you’ll meet other trekkers and hear more about the challenge from the World Experiences team. The briefing is not compulsory but it is recommended to attend and you must cover the cost of attending the briefing yourself.
During the trip: Your group will be accompanied by an experienced trek leader form World Expeditions. Local guides will escort the group along the route. Your luggage is transported by porters to each night’s camp.

**What will the weather be like?**
Equatorial and arctic conditions are both present on Mount Kilimanjaro so you can expect the weather to change from hot and dry, to wet and misty, to very cold. The higher we climb the colder it gets. There is permanent ice at the summit and below freezing temperatures. Night-time temperatures will be very cold.

**Passports and visas**
Participants should have at least six months’ validity on their passports from the date of return to the UK. Everyone travelling from the UK will require a Tanzanian visa (at a cost of approximately £38) before departure.

**What will the accommodation be like?**
A mixture of hotels and camping allocated on a twin sharing basis.

**Is it possible to extend my stay?**
Anyone wanting to stay on after the trek can arrange to do so through The World Expeditions at a cost and subject to availability. Please note you may need to buy a separate visa if you are extending your trip.

**Other Information**

**Fitness**
As with all our Moderate to Challenging programs, we expect clients to be regular outdoors people, enjoying aerobic sport around three or four times a week over some period of time. Preferably this has been a long term interest but if not, you have set a program of fitness preparation with at least three months lead in time to your trip. The fitter you are for your trip, the more enjoyable it will be for you. Activities as close to the actual activity on your trip are the best training; in this instance hill walking, with and without a daypack. This builds leg strength, aerobic capacity and confidence in your ability to walk comfortably with a pack for extended periods. At the same time, you are also comfortable with the layers you like to wear and footwear. Whilst this ascent of Kilimanjaro is not a technical climb, it is nevertheless a short and steep trek at altitude, and for many people it will be the hardest physical walk of their life. In order to get the most out of the trip, people should join in Marangu with a maximum state of fitness. There is not time to ‘get fit on the trek’ as with some of our other longer trek programs in other parts of the world. Talk to us if you are unsure about your suitability for the Rongai route; we would be happy to discuss your level of experience and fitness.
Country information

Tanzania is the largest country of East Africa, being almost 950,000 sq km and made up mainly of a dry highland plateau, with a narrow strip of low-lying coast and the off-shore islands of Zanzibar, Pemba and Mafia. The Rift Valley, containing some of the world’s most magnificent and famous game reserves, sweeps down into Tanzania from Kenya and is covered by many inland lakes; Tanzania’s highest mountains - Meru and Africa’s highest, Mt Kilimanjaro - lie on or close to the Kenyan border in the north of the country. With a heritage of British and German colonialism - and the strong influence of the Portuguese and Arab traders felt along the coast - Tanganyika gained its independence in 1961 and merged with the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba to become Tanzania. Being guided very much by its president for 20 years, Nyerere, it launched into a radical socialist experiment in self-reliance but with little western aid and as one of the world’s poorest countries, its experiment had little chance of success. Today Tanzania is still largely agricultural and depends very much on its tourism for economic survival.

With a population of more than 25 million, including over 100 different tribal groups, the majority of people are Bantu, while Arabic features and cultural traits show up throughout the coastal and island communities. The Masai are in evidence in the north of the country, although they no longer hold the large areas they once did and are found across the larger national parks and games reserves.

Climate

Generally April and May are the months with long rains and should be avoided if considering this climb. November brings short rains but it seldom rains all day. As a general rule, Tanzania is usually warm by day and cool by night. Temperatures rarely rise above 27C during the day or fall below minus 10C at night although these conditions are guidelines only and obviously vary with altitude and topography. In spite of its equatorial location, Kilimanjaro can have severe weather conditions at the higher altitudes and you need to be prepared for temperatures well below freezing at the summit, minus 15C is not uncommon. On the lower slopes, it will usually be mild - warm during the day and cold at night. Some rain can occur at any time on the mountain.

Equipment

In your daypack that you will carry, you will need to carry extra warm clothing, a rain jacket, water bottle, camera gear, valuables and personal items such as sunscreen, lip-eze etc. Porters carry all group gear and your trek pack/kit bag and equipment required. Specialist gear required includes walking boots, day pack and a kit bag or backpack/hiking pack/rucksack for your main luggage that is carried by porters. A comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking.
How much does it cost?

Option 1 – Sponsorship – TOTAL £3,145

- £350 deposit (your place is not secured until you have paid your £350 deposit)
- £800 recommended personal contribution (you can also fundraise this amount if you wish)
- £1,995 minimum sponsorship (we will be there to support you every step of the way with your fundraising)

Your registration fee of £350, £800 personal contribution and the first £1245 of sponsorship will be paid by the RCOG on your behalf to our tour operator, World Expeditions, for the costs of your participation. A minimum of £750 per climber will go straight to the RCOG’s global health work. If you raise more than the required minimum sponsorship then 100% of the extra sponsorship will go straight to the RCOG’s global health work.

Option 2 – Self-Funded – TOTAL £2,395

- £350
- £2045 personal contribution

If you are self-funding the trip there is no minimum required sponsorship amount, however we would like you to fundraise as much as you can for the RCOG’s vital global health work. You can also let all your sponsors know that every single penny you raise in sponsorship will be going directly to help improve the lives of women globally.

Option 3 – Mixed – TOTAL £3,145

You may wish to split the amounts differently. For example you might want to contribute £1,500 yourself and fundraise the remaining £1645. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions about the different payment options.

What if I can't raise the minimum sponsorship?

We will provide you with a fundraising guide full of ideas on how to reach your target. You will also have the support of the RCOG Development Team.

Four months before departure you must have paid the RCOG the minimum amount to cover your place on the trip (£2395 – which includes your £350 deposit). If you have not managed to raise this amount you must either cover the shortfall yourself or forfeit your place on the trip. If you have any problems raising the amount or covering the costs yourself please contact us as soon as possible for advice and options.
We are excited that you will be joining us on the trip of a lifetime and helping us to continue our vital global health work. To find out more about where your money will go please visit our webpages, watch our film and read our testimonials from last year’s challenge event participants.

You can also keep up to date with our challenge event news by following our storify page. Please send us your training and fundraising pictures and the link to your online fundraising page and we will promote it here too!

Thank you and good luck!