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## **Itinerary - East Africa**

### **Mounts Meru and Kilimanjaro – Serengeti, Olduvai and Ngorongoro**

- Day 1 Meet in Nairobi at Fairview Hotel. Our agent will meet your flight and transfer you to the hotel. Hotel and Agent contact details will be advised in due course.
- 2 Impala Shuttle departs hotel at 0800. We will travel 5 hours to Arusha in Tanzania and stay at Outpost Hotel. Alternatively, you can be met by our Arusha agent at Kilimanjaro International Airport, if that is your preferred route, and transferred to the Outpost Hotel.
- 3 Climb of Mount Meru for acclimatization - and the views of course!  
First day - bus to park gate, through grassland and forest, stopping to photograph giraffes, warthogs (hakuna matata!) and other game enroute. Check-in and meeting with our Park ranger before porter hiring. Then 4-5 hours up to Miriakamba Huts through damp forest. A rise of 1000m-3300ft
- 4 Another 1000m to Saddle Hut in 4-5 hours up a steepening and in places rocky track. Forest gives way to giant heather and misty grasslands. For those with energy to spare, an afternoon stroll up little Meru for great views and a bit more acclimatisation.
- 5 The Big Day starts with a 3am alarm! Very definitely “polee-polee” - Swahili for “slowly-slowly” - progress up another 1000m, first by headlight, then into a beautiful dawn at Rhino Point with views of distant Kilimanjaro. We scramble a few rocky sections along a sharply defined ridge past Meru’s inner crater - active only 150 years ago - and so to the summit 4565m-15064ft at about 9 or 10am. So much for the first part! After signing the register, photographing in all directions, drinks and an early lunch we return to Saddle Hut between 2 and 4pm. Afternoon tea, a snooze in the sun and a second useful acclimatization overnight follow.
- 6 Gently downhill, slowly through the mist to Miriakamba for lunch. Then down to the Gate through some excellent grassland ideal for Giraffes, Buffalo and other game. We farewell and tip our porters then take the bus to “The Outpost,” a shower, and a couple of beers.
- 7 Day off! Plenty of time for a sleep-in, washing, the market and final preparations for Kilimanjaro.
- 8 On the Umbwe Route of Mount Kilimanjaro. We have seven days to enjoy a leisurely climb and summit!  
On this, our first day, we will climb from the Park Gate at 1600m-5297ft to Umbwe Cave at 2832m-9348ft through misty, soaring green forest and giant ferns. This solid rise of 1227m-4051ft in 5-6 hours will need an early start!
- 9 To the Barranco Camp. Another 6 hours and about 1000m-3300ft of climb to 3939m-13000ft. We will travel a narrow spectacular ridge in and out of mist before dropping slightly to camp. This day we will see spectacular vegetation changes, from full mist forest to Manuka-Kanuka style scrub, then giant groundsels and heathers giving way to small ground-hugging plants close to the top limit for vegetation.
- 10 An acclimatization day based at Barranco Camp surrounded by superb scenery. A chance to rest, or walk locally towards Karanga River or up towards the glaciers above.

- 11 First westward up and around the mountain on a lovely scenic walk, then up to Lava Tower at 4600m-15180ft. Here we have the option to climb the tower for excellent views west – well worth while! Then slowly up to chilly Arrow Glacier camp beneath the intimidating Breach Wall. Altogether about 6 hours climb.
- 12 The alarm rings at 4am for tea and biscuits and an icy pre-dawn start. Very, very slowly we wander up snow patches, scree and exposed, exhilarating rock steps. Lunch in the sun about 10 then finally, wearily, through the famous Western Breach and in to the Crater 5700m-18800ft. What a spectacular place! We will be camped close to one of the ancient glacier remnants with a chance to stroll in the afternoon, out to the spectacular Reusch ash crater. From the inner rim you look down onto sulphurous fumaroles and the giant central vent. This amazing spot is seen by very few Kili climbers as the high summit is some way off. It is a real bonus and rewards your efforts on the Breach Wall
- 13 Summit day. We leave at 6.30 to ensure views before the clouds roll in. We will be on Uhuru (“Peace”), the top of Africa 5986m-19456ft in about 2 hours. In 2003 we spent an hour photographing, chatting and just enjoying being there. We took pictures for silent souls who looked very unwell. Most were on the 4-day quick trip and suffering from the altitude. From the summit, a slow stroll past glistening glaciers to Stellar Point, savouring magic views and that lovely high feeling before the scree descent to Barafu Hut 4600m-15180ft. Here we stop for a snack before a longish walk to Millennium camp 3500m-10800ft, just at the top of the grassland, fairly tired, at 3-4pm
- 14 Last day on the Hill! Down big steps through thickening scrub, then forest with a chance of mist or showers. In three hours we reach Mweka Gate 1700m-5610ft, sign out, then wander down to the village besieged by hawkers for the transport. A big thankyou and tips to our porters and so back to Arusha for a welcome clean-up.
- 15 Either a relaxed start at 10 to fly to Serengeti or away very early on the longish rough drive which will pass Lake Manyara and Ngorongoro and reach camp late afternoon. The flightseers will view Masai sacred mountain and active carbonate volcano “Ol Doinyo Lengai” en route, and also get an excellent feeling for the size of the Great Rift Valley.
- 16 Game drives early and late with plenty to see – in 2003 we had roaring Lions close by the first night; saw two Cheetahs within minutes of camp, Wildebeeste, Zebra, Giraffe, Lions, Hyenas, Jackals, Hippos, Elephants and many types of Gazelle. Our vehicles have pop-tops which allow us to stand up in the back, with a great view all round. For serious animal photography you will need a long lens. Birds are best seen with 7 or 8 power binoculars – 10s take too long to target.
- 17 We will visit the Park Centre and make another game drive through the acacias before lunch. In the afternoon we drive to Ngorongoro and Simba Camp in the cool mist up on the Crater rim. On the way we detour to visit the Olduvai Gorge – scene of the Leakey Family’s life work - and its little, but amazing, museum.
- 18 We descend a steep road to the crater floor straight into game viewing. The main lake feeds hundreds of Flamingos, and other beautiful birds abound in the grasslands and many ponds and springs. There is the usual good supply of carnivores and ruminants too! After a really good look around we head out, reaching Arusha quite late.
- 19 An 8am departure on the Impala Shuttle for Nairobi which we reach about 2pm. This timing will allow those on a tight schedule to fly out the same evening. The Mount Kenya group will rapidly launder and repack gear and we will all enjoy a farewell dinner as some members will be leaving at this point.