



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

VISA

It is the responsibility of the client to obtain their own visas.

U.S. passport holders: Ensure you have at least one completely blank visa page prior to entering the country. U.S. citizens with valid passports may obtain a visa from the Embassy of Tanzania before arrival in Tanzania or at any port of entry staffed by immigration officials. The U.S. Embassy recommends that U.S. citizens obtain their visas before arriving in Tanzania to avoid potential delays at entry points. The current fee for a visa is US \$100 for a 12-month multiple-entry tourist visa.

Australian passport holders – Australian passport holders are required to obtain visas to enter Tanzania. It is the responsibility of the client to obtain their own visas. The Tanzania High Commission in Australia is www.tanzaniaconsul.org or www.tanzaniaconsul.com and contact details are as follows: Western Australia / Queensland / Northern Territories – Tel: +61 8 9221 0033 Victoria / Southern Australia / Tasmania – Tel: +61 3 9667 0243

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is highly recommended that all clients obtain comprehensive Travel Insurance cover. Please furnish

Epic with a copy of your insurance policy prior to travel. If you require assistance in obtaining travel insurance, please let us know. Policies should be checked to ensure that they include ALL medical situations, including:

- Hospitalisation
- Repatriation
- Cancellation
- Loss of baggage and loss/breakage of valuables en-route
- Loss/breakage of valuables such as cameras (care should be taken on rough roads).

AIR TRANSFERS & LUGGAGE

Please contact your airline for information on luggage restrictions. Any personal items that are not being taken up the mountain may potentially be stored at your hotel. Please discuss with Epic Private Journeys before your departure.

CELL PHONES

Tri-band cell phones on global roaming generally work from all major urban centres. You will also have intermittent reception on the mountain.

SAFETY & MEDICAL

Please consult your General Practitioner or nearest Traveller's Medical Centre for advice on medical issues

relevant to your destination. For additional information you may wish to consult the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention website – <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.htm>.

Safety is absolutely paramount with an undertaking such as Kilimanjaro. Many trivialise Kilimanjaro as just a “walk up a big hill” and therefore do not adequately prepare for the rigours ahead. What is detailed below is not written to engender fear; rather it is an attempt to increase your awareness of the potential problems that can occur on the mountain.

THE EFFECTS OF ALTITUDE

You have no doubt heard of altitude sickness, which is caused by reduced levels of oxygen/air density. The human body is well capable of adjusting to altitude - the actual individual rate of acclimatisation is a genetic factor - but the process takes time and the best way to minimise the symptoms of hypoxia is to ascend slowly. That is why we conduct the climb over 7 days.

There are three medical conditions that you need to be aware when climbing at high altitude and beyond. As we ascend to high altitude our bodies have to acclimatize to the decreasing amount of oxygen in the atmosphere. As



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an indication, there is 50% less oxygen available at the summit of Kilimanjaro to what is available at sea level. Failure to acclimatize, usually due to a too rapid ascent above 2000m (6500ft), results in symptoms of altitude illness. These problems become common above 2500m (8200 ft) and present in the following ways:

- Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) is the most common and is not life-threatening
- HACE (High Altitude Cerebral Edema) is a life-threatening illness that can develop from AMS
- HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema) is a life-threatening illness; it may occur on its own, or with AMS or HACE

These three presentations of altitude illness can vary from mild to severe. It is for this reason that we employ the services of the very best and most experienced mountain guides.

One can prevent AMS, HACE and HAPE by acclimatizing wisely. For that reason we look to maximise our time on the mountain. The most common preventable causes of altitude illness are gaining height too rapidly and over-exertion. We walk at a steady plod with regular rest/drink breaks. There is no virtue in pushing on or

striving to finish at the front. Aim to avoid getting out of breath! If you are struggling to keep up with your group, do not hesitate to speak up so that timely help can be given. While dehydration does not increase the risk of altitude illness, it does interfere with performance (so does over-hydration, especially without salts replacement!). The only way to be sure you are drinking enough is to keep your urine 'pale and plentiful'. This may mean drinking as much as 4 to 6 litres of fluids per day (as water, tea, soup, etc.). You should avoid all sedative drugs (antihistamines, tranquilizers, sleeping pills, etc.) as they suppress respiration and therefore increase the risk of altitude illness. This includes alcohol.

We monitor, morning and night, clients' pulse and blood oxygen content. By doing this we glean valuable information about how your body is dealing with the altitude adjustment. This enables us to plan accordingly should adjustments be outside what is considered normal.

Clients may consider taking Diamox, an oral drug (in tablet form) widely used to combat the effects of mild altitude sickness by causing the body to breathe more deeply during sleep. This is of course a personal preference and it is important to seek professional

medical advice before leaving home. Diamox is a diuretic so we need to be particularly careful of the level of fluid intake during your climb. Be aware that Diamox may cause an allergy and must be avoided if there is any history of a severe adverse reaction to Diamox or sulfa containing drugs (mainly sulphonamide-type antibiotics such as Co-Trimoxazole, Septrin, Bactrin). If the sulpha allergy is mild (rash, diarrhoea etc.) a test dose or two of Diamox could be tried well before departure (do not do this if the allergy is severe!). Most people with mild sulpha allergy can take Diamox.

Some common side effects of Diamox:

- Extra urine output. Worries about this tend to be exaggerated. Keep your urine pale and plentiful. Use a pee bottle (sanifem or Tupperware box for women) at night in tents or lodges to avoid getting cold or falling while going outside to the toilet
- The most obvious side effects are paraesthesia (tingling) in lips, fingers, toes, and a metallic taste when drinking carbonated drinks. Both symptoms are milder with lower doses and disappear on stopping the medication

A common concern about Diamox is that it will mask the



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onset of altitude illness. There is no evidence that Diamox masks the onset of AMS, HACE or HAPE; however, Diamox is not guaranteed to work. Even if someone is taking Diamox, AMS, HACE or HAPE may still develop. In which case act accordingly.

The effects of some medications can be increased with altitude or under stressful exercise. It is important that clients consult their physician about any medication that they plan to take with them on the climb. It is wise to avoid taking any unnecessary medication.

OXYGEN CYLINDERS

We carry oxygen cylinders up the mountain in the unlikely event that someone should contract severe mountain sickness. Perhaps this is perceived by some as an over precaution. That said we plan for the worst case scenario.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

The following conditions need careful pre-departure assessment to ensure climbers are considered fit:

- Asthma and other respiratory problems
- Hypertension

- Cardiovascular disease. Untreated angina is a contraindication
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Hip, knee or ankle problems
- Psychological problems - Trekking can be challenging emotionally and people going must be mentally stable. A person with effectively treated depression who is emotionally and mentally stable may trek. A person with a psychotic illness should not trek.

People with hypertension (high blood pressure) and asthma, may climb to altitude provided these conditions are mild to moderate, stable and well controlled, thoroughly assessed by a medical professional and have suitable preparations put in place. While climbing, an asthmatic should carry (in addition to their usual medication) a spacer, a course of antibiotic and oral prednisolone, and know how and when to use them in an attack. People with a history of unstable asthma, especially with severe attacks, are advised against climbing. This is because air travel, allergens and infection can all precipitate asthma attacks, which are difficult to treat in a wilderness setting and potentially deadly. Diabetics and epileptics may be at increased risk

above 3000m. Climbers should inform their leader of any regular medication and any treatment plans they may have.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Regular radio and telephone contact is maintained with our base office in Arusha whilst climbing. A Senior Manager is on call at all times whilst we are on the mountain. In the event of an emergency, the climb leader and doctor will assess the situation and formulate an evacuation plan. Evacuation is mostly by foot/stretchers although this will depend where we are on the mountain at the time.

If a client has to be evacuated off the mountain, depending upon their situation, they will be:

- Medically examined and transferred to our lodgings in Arusha to await the main bodies arrival off the mountain
- Hospitalised in Arusha, or
- In very severe cases evacuated to Nairobi, Kenya by the Flying Doctor Service.

Clients are covered with membership of AMREF, which incorporates the Flying Doctor's Society of Africa. In the event of a medical emergency, AMREF will evacuate the



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client. Membership of AMREF does not replace travel insurance, which all clients must possess.

CLIMB LEADER

The services of an experienced climb leader are crucial to the smooth and safe running of the climb.

MOUNTAIN LEADER

Our guides are among the most experienced on the Mountain and are comprehensively trained in first aid. They are experts at recognising the early stages of altitude sickness and take appropriate steps to ensure that clients are always within safe parameters. The two head mountain guides I use have each been up the mountain over a hundred times each. We always work of a minimum guide to client ratio of 1:2. Invariably, on the final push to the summit, groups splinter with some climbers feeling stronger than others. This enables climbers to continue at their own pace. It will further enable climbers to be escorted down should they choose or be forced to do so.

MEALS

Meals throughout the climb and safari are best described as “home style” cooking. Believe it or not on the

mountain meals are a three-course affair and are served in our large mess tent.

PERSONAL MEDICAL KIT

On the climb guides carry all basic medications but we recommend that all clients take a small, personal kit which may include:

- Painkillers (aspirin/paracetamol - strong painkillers should not be taken as they may mask the symptoms of altitude sickness)
- Imodium or other anti-diarrhoea tablets
- Oral rehydration salts/sachets
- Antihistamines
- Blister treatment
- Plasters/Band aids
- Antiseptic
- Talcum powder
- Dressings, especially pressure relief for blisters
- Sunscreen (Factor 20+)
- Insect repellent containing DEET
- Antacids

*Please Note: Altitude can effect menstrual cycles.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Physical preparation is critical to success. The better conditioned one can be physically then the better chance you have of summiting.

The type of fitness is more important than the degree of fitness. Kilimanjaro is a hike, so the best preparation you can do, is to hike, preferably under simulated conditions. While running helps to some degree, it does not fully prepare your muscles for a strenuous 7 day hike. We suggest that you spend some of your training time by simply walking. Going for walks, in addition to regular gym work in order to also stimulate some muscle development, has proven to be the most successful preparation. It is important that a fair percentage of raining occurs in the boots you intend to wear on the mountain.

As a general rule, depending upon your base fitness level, you should aim to start training at least 3 months out. Many people use personal trainers to help them prepare for their climb. This is an excellent way to ensure training discipline is maintained. As an alternative Epic Private Journeys can assist by providing a remotely monitored training programme (at additional cost).



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CREW

The number of crew on the climb is very high. This is in part due to our policy of being very strict on porter carrying weights, but also reflects the level of service.

The structure and role of our crews are as follows:

- Head guide: the lynch pin in the operations. The head guide organizes logistics and crew, provides key first aid decisions and monitoring, briefs clients on a daily basis and provides feedback to base. He is supported by:
 - Assistant guides: all assistants have up to date first aid training and support the head guide. Our guide to guest ratio for the final ascent is extremely high.
 - Cooks: superbly trained and highly experienced our cooks work wonders in challenging conditions.
 - Camp crew: take care of ensuring that the camp is set out well and ensure that our tents are set in advance of our arrival. They also serve the food and keep us stocked with water.
 - The Porters: the work horses of the mountain that ferry equipment from camp to camp. All porters are required to be suitably kitted out

pre climb and work hard to ensure that our camp is always set up in advance.

EXCELLENT CLIMBING EQUIPMENT

We provide a superlative specification of equipment, which has been selected over time for a combination of durability, comfort and weight.

On the climb component main equipment includes:

- Mess tent: for dining, briefings and escaping the elements. These are either our North Face tents or our custom designed tents depending on group size.
- Sleeping tents: spacious 3 person tents which we use for 2 people.
- Excellent sleeping bags with cotton liners, rated -20c (extreme rating) they are also dry cleaned before every climb. 3 inch trekking mattresses are also provided for extra comfort.
- Toilet tent: with proper sit down facilities this provides a level of comfort that negates having to find suitably sized rocks or using long drop park toilets that are often dirty / broken down or simply non-existent.

GRATUITIES

Tipping is very much the norm in Africa. It is worth pointing out that there can be fairly dramatic cultural differences in attitudes to tipping.

Your climb leader will coordinate the tipping for those that wish to leave a tip. This will be done at both the conclusion of the climb and the safari. Tipping for a Kilimanjaro climb is max US \$350.00 per person.