

GEAR LIST – KILIMANJARO

INTRODUCTION

In this document you will find a list of items we believe to be essential for your ascent and a list of items that will make your trip more comfortable. While what follows is an extensive list, clothing and equipment are also a personal thing. For example, some people prefer a down jacket to a fleece, others prefer a camelback to drinking from a water bottle. Therefore, when reading through the document keep this in the back of your mind.

EQUIPMENT – HIRE OR BUY?

Trekking can be an expensive hobby to undertake and we fully understand tackling a high-altitude summit could well be a once in a lifetime adventure for some people. So where does that leave you? Most people already have a lot of the clothing required as they tend to hike as a hobby already. This leaves some of the more technical equipment like head torches, poles, and layers to handle the extreme cold only left to buy.

We would recommend buying your own pair of boots (for reasons see section on footwear). Anything else can be rented and is down to your own personal choice. If hiring equipment though, please make sure it works beforehand and that you are comfortable using it. For example, if you have rented poles make sure that they extend fully, and the latches are not broken.

We have some kit to hire in Tanzania, but it should only ever be used for people who have lost or forgotten their own equipment as we cannot guarantee we will have the kit spare.

LAYERS

Layering your clothes is essential when trekking anywhere and no less so on the mountain. By dressing in multiple lighter layers, as opposed to a single thick or bulky layer, the hiker can better adapt to a wider range of conditions. Layers can be removed or added according to the weather and/or exertion level at any given time.

Ideally your clothing selections should complement each other so that each layer works together as part of a flexible overall system designed to maximize efficiency and comfort.

IMPORTANT: If the conditions demand, you should be able to comfortably wear all your clothing simultaneously. When it comes to the outdoors, there are three principal layers: **Base Layer, Mid Layer** and **Outer Layer**.

BASE LAYER

The foundation layer worn next to the skin.

Keeps the skin dry by wicking away moisture.

Ideally it should be lightweight and dry quickly.

Avoid cotton which clings to the skin when wet, does not insulate and takes longer to dry.

MID LAYER

The warmth or insulation layer/s. It keeps the warm air in and the cold air out.

Can be multiple items, depending on the temperature and conditions.

Common examples include fleece, down or synthetic insulation.

Fleeces are good for quick drying and breathable warmth whereas down is extremely effective in colder temperatures and great for low intensity activity or keeping warm in camp at night.

OUTER LAYER

Provides protection from the wind, rain, and snow.

It should be both windproof and waterproof but also breathable to allow your base and mid layer to wick the moisture and heat away from your body.

FOOTWEAR

Footwear is, without a doubt, the most personal and important choice when it comes to trekking. Your jacket: a bit loose or a bit tight, for the most part it will still do its job. Your shoes however, too small and they could steal your toenails; too big and they will cause you irritating blisters. They are the most important piece of kit in one's outdoor arsenal should not be sniffed at.

So how do we choose the right shoes for a mountain like Kilimanjaro? Especially with the hundreds of different options available staring blankly back at you from the shelves in the store. It can be a daunting experience even for the mountain savvy but after reading this section on choosing your footwear, hopefully you will be better armed when entering that mountain footwear arena.

GENERAL ADVICE

Go to a reputable adventure shop who knows what they are talking about when it comes to footwear. Tell the shop attendant where you plan to use your boots and ask for his advice. Your boots should have ankle support. Mountains are an extremely easy place to roll or even break an ankle. Not something you want to do on day 1 after travelling so far to conquer a mountain only to be defeated at the first hurdle; especially when it could have been so easily avoided.

Do not rush buy your boots. Your boots are a big investment, if you do not feel completely happy with them then try a different pair.

OPTIONS

It is said that each pound (0.45kg) on your feet equates to at least five pounds (2.3kg) on your back. That should not mean however that you sacrifice other important qualities to save a few grams on your feet. In our minds there are only really 2 options when it comes to mountain boots. We see a lot of people on the mountain with a third option, which works fine almost all the time. However, if the weather closes in, the temperature drops and the rain clouds break, it will be the extremities of the body that are hit first.

The 3 options for mountain and high-altitude trekking are:

B2 Alpine Boots

Designed specifically for the mountain environment

Weight: 1kg (2.2lbs) and up

Stiffened mid-sole

Higher ankle profile

Thicker upper with the facility to attach crampons

Great for someone who climbs mountains regularly and ventures above the snow line

Expensive as more technical than other options.

Heavyweight Boots

Usually all-leather.

Weight – 1.5 kg (3.3 lbs.) and up. Considerably more if water gets inside after days of walking through mud and crossing rivers.

Generally, require a long break-in period.

The most durable, waterproof, and warmest of all trekking footwear.

Can be expensive

Lightweight Boots

Generally, weigh between 1 (2.2 lbs.) and 1.5 kg (3.3 lbs.).

Most popular footwear for backpackers.

Often made from a fusion of synthetic materials, suede, and occasionally split-grain leather.

Require very little break-in time.

Comfier, more breathable, and dry quicker than their heavier equivalents. Less so than trail runners and running shoes.

Most high-end models come with a waterproof-breathable lining. Such linings usually work OK whilst the shoe is new but lose their effectiveness after repeated wear.

Not as durable as heavier, leather models, but more durable than trail runners.

THE MOUNTAIN

Now that we have discussed the types of boot, let us look more closely at the terrain we can expect on mountains like Kilimanjaro.

- **Temperature** - Varied. It can be as high as mid 20's (°C) during the day in the lower sections and down to -25°C (including wind chill) at the summit. Our advice would be to plan for the cold as it is much easier to deal with hot feet than a case of frost nip at the summit.
- **Rain** - Rain is highly likely at some point at least during your hike on the mountain. Gortex or a similar waterproof boot is essential for your trek to keep your feet dry and warm.
- **Snow** - Depending on the time of year you intend to climb will decide the amount of snow that there is at the higher elevations. This is where the B2 Boot comes into its technical element as you can attach crampons however, you can also purchase ice grippers, which will fit any non-technical boot. When walking on snow for a period, the cold WILL penetrate the boot so it is just as essential to have a good pair of thermal socks inside your boot as well.
- **Your Feet** - Your feet are unique to you for several reasons and therefore a notoriously difficult subject to advice on. Depending on the type of arch you have, the length of your toes, the width of your foot and even the past injuries you have sustained all has a huge bearing when walking.

The gold standard of advice on all matters to do with feet would obviously come from a podiatrist and if you are serious about hiking we would strongly suggest an appointment with one as your feet can easily affect the rest of your body if not looked after correctly.

It is worth mentioning that different makes of shoes will fit different types of feet better. For example, one make will suit a wider foot whereas another will suit a thinner foot more.

- **Size** - Over the course of a long hike your feet WILL swell. This is especially true when hiking in hot conditions. Shoes that feel nice and snug in the store, will most probably feel tight and uncomfortable after a few long days on the trail. Many salespeople will recommend a gap of one finger between your heel and the back of the shoe. This is a personal preference, but you can go up to 2 fingers even. It is easier to wear another thin pair of socks until your feet swell than to have boots that are too tight. Tight boots also cause your toes to hit the front of the boots during the descent, which after time can lead to losing a toenail or 2!

If possible, try the shoes on with the same socks you will be wearing on the hike. Before purchasing walk up and down stairs, run around the store and wiggle your toes vigorously. If there is any tightness whatsoever, the shoes are too small. Most decent stores will have an area where you can simulate walking up and down hills. Some stores will also let you take the shoes home and walk around inside as much as you want to make sure the fit is correct, which is worth considering. Remember, your feet WILL swell.

- **Break Them In** - No matter what your choice in footwear, go for at least a few hikes before embarking on a multi-day trek. Your feet will need time to adapt. This especially holds true if you purchase boots, which may require weeks of regular wear before they feel completely comfortable. Blisters are much easier to deal with new boots after a single day's trekking. Blisters on the mountain, when you have another 4 days to hike, can be much more bothersome!

ESSENTIAL ITEMS

- **Solid Hiking Boots:** Boots should have high ankle support with a solid Vibram, or equivalent, sole. Gore-Tex, or other waterproofing, is recommended to have for wet days as well as added insulation. Be sure to break your boots in at least 4 WEEKS prior to departure. Additionally, bring a spare set of laces.
- **Sunglasses:** Your sunglasses should have 100% UV protection and should reduce glare as well as visible light. The frames should be lightweight with a wrap-around design for enhanced grip and staying power. Additionally, side shields are recommended to block peripheral light.
- **Day Pack:** The most important things to look for if you need to purchase one is size (30L is good), hydration pack compatibility, hip and chest straps, frameless, good padding on shoulder straps, and water bottle holders.



- **Water/Wind proof Jacket:** Your water/windproof jacket is your outer water repellent layer. Gore-Tex, seam-sealed is recommended as well as a hood for added warmth.
- **Water/Wind proof Pants:** Your water/wind proof pants will be worn on summit day as well as on rainy afternoons. These pants are essential for warmth and should be Gore-Tex lined and have lower leg zips.
- **Water/Wind proof Mittens or Gloves:** These are used for extreme temperatures and primarily worn on summit day. Be sure your gloves or mittens have a wrist cords as well as a reinforced palm to maintain grip during wet conditions. A removable liner is essential for drying, washing, and replacing.
- **2 Duffel (Soft-Sided) Bags:** Leave one bag at the hotel in Arusha to store non-essential gear when on the mountain (such as clean clothes for changing when off the mountain and for onward travel) and the other for carriage by the porters when on the mountain. Bear in mind porters cannot carry more than 20 kgs/44 lbs on the mountain so your mountain duffel does not need to be too large.
- **Things to Keep in Mind About the Essentials:** Look for items that will add less volume to your overall pack. We will be using mules to carry our equipment however they are limited in the amount each can carry. Heavy synthetic materials will be very limiting and could cause issues when packing up for the hike. If you have any questions about an item you currently own please call, or bring it to a preparation hike, and we can discuss it.



CLOTHING & LAYERING:

- **2 Pair Synthetic Warm Weather Trekking Socks:** These socks are for trekking in the warmest part of the day since they are made of a CoolMax fabric. CoolMax wicks moisture, dries quickly and breathes well, keeping your feet dry and preventing blisters.
- **4 Pair Heavier Synthetic or Wool Blend Socks:** Your wool socks are ideal for around camp when the temperature drops as well as on cold mornings. Merino wool is very comfortable and dries quickly with fewer odours than synthetic blends.
- **2 Pair Long Underwear Top:** This will be your base layer for colder mornings, evenings, and days where the temperature drops considerably. The material is lightweight, tight fitting, moisture wicking, and comfortable.
- **2 Pair Long Underwear Bottom:** This will be your bottom base layer for colder mornings, evenings, and days when the temperature drops considerably. The material is lightweight, tight fitting, moisture wicking, and comfortable.










- **Warm Pants:** These pants are ideal for evenings around the camp and cold days on the trail. Typically made of lightweight fleece, and Wind Pro material, these pants should offer the added warmth in case of cold nights or high winds on the summit.
- **Fleece Top:** This Polartec 200 weight top will provide added warmth during the evenings as well as on cold morning starts. Please look for fleece material and stay away from cotton sweatshirts. Ideally, this item is worn over the thermal base layer and underneath your water/wind proof jacket.
- **2 Pair Shorts/Pants for Hiking:** These convertible shorts/pants will be what we hike in every day. They should be of a lightweight, quick drying nylon material. Some come with UPF protection and mosquito protection.
- **2 Pair Long or Short Sleeve Shirts for The Trail:** Your trekking shirt is what we should wear early in the climb in warmer climates. The shirt is moisture wicking, light weight, and designed for multi-day hikes.
- **Mid-Layer Top:** This shirt is a long sleeve version of the one provided above. The long sleeve trail shirt offers added warmth, more protection from the sun, and an additional layer for evenings and early morning starts.
- **Warm Hat:** This fleece or wool hat is ideal for evenings and will be valuable in the event of cold weather and temperatures on the summit. The hat should be tight fitting with minimal loose ends.
- **Lightweight Gloves:** Fleece gloves are essential. Look for gloves that are Polartec 200 weight with a leather reinforced palm. For more protection wind proofing is available and will add an extra layer of warmth.
- **Balaclava:** The balaclava provides added warmth on summit day and colder evening. The balaclava should be of synthetic or wool material, light weight, and close fitting.
- **Sun hat:** Your sun hat should be worn at the lower camps and should provide ample coverage for the face. A full brimmed hat is good for added shade and increased sun protection. Additionally, a neck scarf should also be considered to protect the back of the neck.
- **Waterproof Breathable Gaiters:** Your gaiters should be lightweight and durable. Look for Gore-Tex lined with the ability to fit over your boots. Velcro or adjustable sides for easy access is recommended.
- **Down Jacket:** 800 fill down jacket will add much need warmth for cold evenings as well as the added layers for summit day. Down is recommended for its compressibility and is comfortable around camp in the early nights on the climb. Patagonia, Mountain Hardware, Marmot, and North Face are branding the guides wear.



- **Things to Keep in Mind for Clothing:** Less is more!!! It is important to bring the essential gear discussed above, but it is more important to refrain from bringing items that are not recommended. Items to stay away from are cotton socks, jeans, multiple pairs of shoes, and heavy sweatshirts. Look for items that are moisture wicking and quick drying fabrics as opposed to cotton fabrics.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

- **Yaktrax:** Yaktrax Walk Traction Cleats for Walking on Snow and Ice. These are important for when the weather calls for more traction and grip on the mountain. 
- **Head Lamp:** Petzl and Black Diamond make several models of small and efficient head lamps. Look for ones that have multiple lighting levels, LED bulbs and uses AAA batteries. Please bring at least 3 sets of spare batteries to ensure ample lighting on your summit attempt. 
- **Camp Shoes (Teva, Crocs, Sandals):** These are great for around camp after a long day on the trail. These can also be used for creek crossings that may be higher than the boot. Flip flops work well in warmer climates but are not as effective during cold nights. 
- **Hydrator:** Hydrators are ideal when hiking for several hours because they enable you to drink slowly and frequently. 2-3 litres are a good size and should fit easily into your pack. All Camelbaks come with a bite valve, or on/off switch, as well as a large access port for filling. You must bring a **NEOPRENE SLEEVE** for the hose to prevent freezing. 
- **Bug Spray:** DEET based products work well and we find that the spray on versions last longer and are less messy. 4-6-ounce repellents that are perspiration and splash resistant is great. 
- **Sunscreen:** 30 SPF or higher is recommended as well as waterproof and sweat proof. 8 ounces will be plenty, and we typically carry one with 45+ SPF for our faces and a 30 SPF for other exposed areas. Banana Boat, REI, Kinesis and All Terrain are good options. 
- **2 Wide Mouth Water Bottles:** 2 x 1 litre water bottle is essential for hydrating at lunch, around the camp, and refilling throughout the day. Stay away from glass and heavy metals and look for Lexan for durability. 

For males, a third water bottle should be considered for use as a potty at night and must be labelled accordingly.

ESSENTIALS

	Solid Hiking Boots
	Sunglasses
	Day Pack
	Water/Windproof Jacket & Pants
	Sunscreen
	Water/Windproof Mittens or Gloves
	Duffel for hotel
	Medium Duffel for porters

CLOTHING & LAYERING

	2 Pair Synthetic Warm Trekking Socks
	4 Pair Heavier Synthetic or Wool Blend Socks
	2 Pair Long Underwear Top
	2 Pair Long Underwear Bottom
	Warm Pants
	Waterproof Breathable Gaiters
	2 Pair Shorts / Pants for Trekking
	2 Pair Long Sleeve or Short Sleeve Shirts
	Mid Layer Top & Fleece Top
	Warm & Sun Hat
	Lightweight Gloves
	Balaclava
	Down Jacket
	Hand & Feet Warmers (2X each). Gel/Air activated are the best

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

	Yaktrax (when snowing)
	Headlamp (3x batteries)
	Camp Shoes
	Hydrator (Neoprene Sleeve)
	Bug Spray
	Bandana to protect your neck
	2 wide mouth water bottles
	Dry Bag (20L+)
	Pack Cover
	Trekking Poles
	Camp Towel

OPTIONAL ITEMS

	Camera (extra batteries/SD card)
	Paperback reading books
	Journal with pen or pencil
	Water Flavouring (Cytomax)
	Hand Sanitizer
	2 Garbage Bags for dirty clothes
	Pocket Knife
	Ear Plugs, Ipod or MP3 player
	Flavoured Energy Bars, 4 per day
	Rehydrate Sachets, 3 per day
	Personal First Aid Kit (Diamox, band aids, mole skin or second skin, Ibuprofen, Aspirin, Sani-Wipes)
	Cell Phone with charger (16000-32000 banks Amphour are best). Tri & quad band phones work on Kili