



Mt Kenya Mountain Medicine Expedition

Mount Kenya National Park, 13-25 March 2022

Info package v2021_0905

This information may be subject to change – please check with us to confirm the newest version.

Contact ross@wildmedix.com for the latest update. Are you on the Mt Kenya MME WhatsApp Q&A group yet? If not, sign up at <https://chat.whatsapp.com/IZ5o5G38fzNLvdiCtkccyY>

Introduction

There is no better way to learn expedition medicine than to take part in an expedition, and no better place to learn mountaineering than on a mountain. Combining the two concepts, WildMedix presents a Mountain Medicine Expedition on Mount Kenya, Africa's second highest and arguably most spectacular peak. Home to the highest alpine climbing on the continent, it also affords expedition participants of all skill levels an opportunity to tackle the highest *via ferrata* in the world. A lofty wilderness of volcanic spires, beautiful tarns, hidden valleys and high glaciers, Mt Kenya is an excellent place to gain personal and professional insight into high altitude medicine: it features an 'easy' trekking peak (Point Lenana, 4985 m) which does not require technical mountaineering, but also offers the opportunity to learn safe movement on rock and glaciers, and an option of a technical climb to the highest summits, Nelion (5188 m) and/or Batian (5199 m), separated by the mythical "Gates of Mist". Free of the ruthless competition between tour operators (aiming for the quickest turnaround on the mountain) found on Kilimanjaro, it is a true wilderness experience – untamed, remote, breath-taking, and multifaceted.

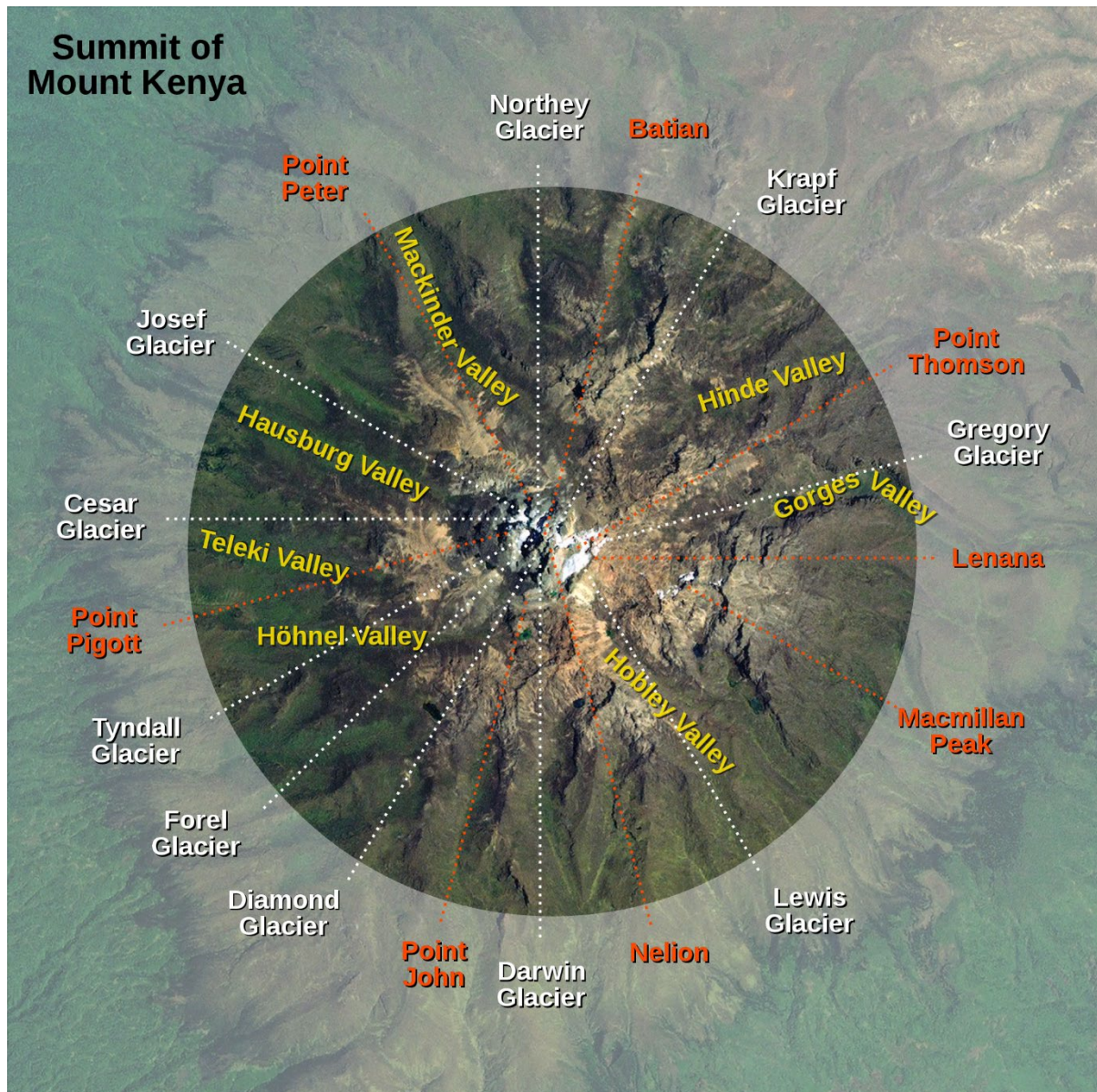
Over the course of the expedition, experts in the fields of mountaineering and wilderness/expedition medicine will cover topics ranging from pre-tip training and preparation to work as an expedition medic, wilderness health and hygiene, common African infectious diseases, wilderness trauma management, high altitude physiology and medicine, and backcountry and mountaineering skills.

While the course is aimed at medical professionals we also encourage suitably skilled volunteers with an interest in remote and wilderness medicine, especially mountain rescue, to join us. We are also



offering a 'trek-or-climb-only' option, where non-medical friends and family can join the expedition at a reduced cost. Trek-only participants will take part in the same itinerary but will not undergo the lecture and practical training sessions (leading to lots of time to relax or to acclimatise if your goal is to climb the peaks).

An adequate baseline level of fitness is necessary (and hiking experience is advisable), but prior mountaineering or climbing skills are not required, unless you wish to join the technical party to climb Batian/Nelion. If you are uncertain about your suitability, please contact us for advice.



Why not Kilimanjaro? Well, because we've listened! Mt Kenya is a wilder, more 'expedition-like' experience, offers more freedom, and, importantly, is about 40% of the cost of an expedition of similar duration and training on Kili. However, if you really want to tick Kilimanjaro off your bucket list, speak to us about arranging a climb to follow immediately upon our descent from Mt Kenya. It is the only time we would recommend a quick Kili itinerary, as you will be already very well acclimatised after more than 6 days above 4000 m, and less than an hour's flight from Nairobi. If you'd prefer something a little more sedate to relax afterwards, talk to us about the option of a short safari before you fly home.

About the Expedition

Preparation for the WildMedix Mountain Medicine Expedition will begin well before your departure, when you receive the required reading material and a navigation workbook. If you wish to apply your new-found planning and navigation skills prior to the expedition, look for the Chogoria Route. Our chosen course is considered the most spectacular route up Mt Kenya, and, as it has a slightly longer and more gradual ascent, it is perfect for acclimatisation. This side of the mountain is quieter and wilder than the more well-frequented southern routes, and gives a great opportunity for seeing wildlife. Possibilities include large game (eland, zebra, buffalo and even elephant are occasionally seen) as well as Colobus and Sykes monkeys, and rich bird life. Also, keep your ears open for the eerie cry of the tree-hyrax, described in “No Picnic on Mt Kenya”!

After flying into Kenya, you will be transferred by road to the Chogoria Bandas (2900m). You will spend three nights acclimatising at these simple mountain cabins tucked in the rosewood forests on the slopes of Mt Kenya, within the National Park. We will get to know the group over dinner on the first night. The next two days will be spent covering a series of lectures and practical sessions on wilderness, mountain and expedition medicine, and sorting gear for the climb. As you adjust to the altitude and disconnecting with the outside world at the bandas, expect to see wild buck wandering through the camp in the morning mist, listen to the shifting patterns of bird-calls as the day matures, and dodge buffalo on evening acclimatization walks.

On the morning of Day 4 we will begin our trek up the Chogoria Gorges route to Lake Ellis (3460m), our campsite for the first night of the trek. Leaving the forests behind, we walk through thickets and grasslands into the heath zone. Stay alert, as buck and zebra abound, and it's not unknown to encounter wild elephant at these altitudes. If you reach the lake with lots of energy, there is the option of a short acclimatization side trip up Mugu Hill to see views of the Giant's Billiard Table.

From Lake Ellis we ascend to Lake Michaelson (4000m), a picturesque alpine tarn known for its trout fishing, where we will spend two nights before continuing on to Simba Tarn (4650m). This is a spectacular few days' of walking with sweeping views up the Gorges Valley, and your first view of the impressive “Temple”: a dramatic rock feature that marks the head of the valley. Thanks to our extra night at Lake Michaelson, we will have time for practical skills training and simulation in the field, covering aspects of backcountry skills, mountaineering, navigation, communication, patient assessment and care, as well as some time to relax and enjoy the views. Evenings on the mountain are kept for short lectures and more informal discussions on wilderness and expedition medicine topics.

From Simba Tarn, we climb to the Austrian Hut (4700m), with spectacular views across the Lewis Glacier to the highest three peaks: Lenana (4985 m), Nelion (5188 m) and Batian (5199 m,). Arriving in time for lunch, we will spend the afternoon on the Lewis Glacier practicing glacier techniques with those who want to get some experience on snow and ice. Our slow ascent and acclimatisation means that by now we are ready to summit Lenana (4985m), and we will head up on our summit attempt the following morning. The technical climbing party will spend a second night at Austrian Hut before setting off pre-dawn for their climb up the South-East Ridge of Nelion and across the Gates of Mist to the highest peak, Batian. Those in the group who are not climbing will either spend a second night at Austrian Hut before hiking the tough but incredibly beautiful summit circumnavigation the following day, or may descend to the Teleki Valley for a rest day.

The following night the group will reconvene at Mackinders Camp in the Teleki Valley. This campsite has dramatic views of the peaks, and was the setting for the BBC's Frozen Planet scenes of Cabbage



Groundsels opening and closing at night. Our penultimate day on the mountain will be spent at Mackinders Camp with the Mt Kenya Mountain Rescue Team. We will work with the Rescue Rangers to cover some simulation scenarios specific to high altitude medicine and rescue. They have a wealth of experience in altitude sickness and the logistics of coordinating remote rescue. This is also a good chance to practice the set up and use of supplemental oxygen, and the portable altitude chamber (PAC/Gamow/Certec Bag), as well as to practice various methods of stretcher improvisation, carries, and splints.

The next morning we exit the park via the Naro Moru Route down the Teleki Valley. We will be picked up at the Met Station and travel back to our accommodation in Nanyuki for a celebratory dinner. The last morning will see heartfelt goodbyes as we return to the airport and begin travel home.



Expedition costs, inclusions and exclusions

Costs:

For the first time, we are structuring this expedition with stratified fees for international, African and Kenyan citizens. This is a deliberate effort to cross-subsidize participation from candidates in low- to middle-income countries, and recognize the discounted fees granted to Kenyan citizens to access the National Park. If you are uncertain as to which fee is applicable, please chat to us. The full expedition fee is USD 4250/3500/2800 per person for International/African/Kenyan citizens respectfully. This includes all medical and mountaineering training, the expedition itself, and the specific items listed in the section below. Group size is limited to guarantee personal and focused attention on all participants. Please note that the camping on the mountain is in shared tents; this is not negotiable for safety reasons, but a single supplement for non-tented at Chogoria and in Nanyuki is available. The trek-or-climb-only option expedition fee is USD 3350/2340/1800 respectfully, and includes all items except the textbooks, lectures and practical/simulation exercises, and course completion certificate. Repeat WMX customers and/or Wilderness Medical Society members are eligible for a 10% discount on the applicable expedition fee. Fundamentally, we want people to be able to access wilderness medicine education and experiences, and so if you have financial challenges, please talk to us in confidence.

Course fee includes:

- Experienced expedition leader and medical director, highly trained instructors, and industry-leading local expedition company providing logistics.
- Professionally rated and mountain-rescue trained technical mountaineering instructors.



- Personal and group supervision and training throughout all aspects of the course/expedition
- FAWM and CME/CPD accreditation. Letter of attendance provided on request.
- Commemorative multifunctional headwear
- Prescribed textbook (*Oxford Handbook of Wilderness and Expedition Medicine*)
- Prescribed navigation workbook (Andrew Friedemann's '*Navigation Anyplace Wild*')
- Local accommodation and all meals from dinner on the evening of arrival until the course dinner on the final day before departure
- Park, nature conservation, trekking and rescue fees (required by Mt Kenya National Park)
- Guide and cook fees (guides are required, and their salaries help uplift communities)
- Porter fees (each participant will be able to have one 8 kg bag portered on the mountain)
- Tented and/or hut accommodation on the mountain
- Group equipment (tents, mattresses, cooking and group mountaineering equipment)
- Eating utensils, plates, cups, kitchenware, etc.
- Course completion certificate
- Transport to and from Nairobi (Jomo Kenyatta International Airport) to Mt Kenya

You need pay your own:

- Flights to and from Kenya, and any required COVID screening costs. We strongly advise full vaccination prior to travel; some countries will require other vaccinations as well.
- Travel and medical insurance (compulsory – we will provide recommendations)
- Soft and alcoholic drinks
- Tips for guides and porters. (Budget to pay USD 100 – 300. This might sound steep now, but rather bring along sufficient funds and make a decision after meeting and working with the incredible people who will look after you on the mountain. Please note that tipping the WildMedix staff is neither required nor requested; if you try, we will pass it on to the local staff with your gratitude.)



Required & Advised Equipment

Required (Compulsory) Equipment

These items are an indication of what will be required and what is not negotiable. WildMedix has negotiated a discount for the expedition members from should you wish to purchase additional items. A detailed kit list will be provided when you sign on for the expedition.

- Duffle bag: You may wish to consider a small bag for items remaining at the lodge.
- Rucksack: You will be carrying your equipment, including rain gear, water, snacks for the day and personal items such as a camera.
- Sleeping bag: aim for a comfort rating of between -5 and -10 °C (with a liner if necessary).

- Hiking boots: Waterproof mid-weight mountaineering or trekking boots are advisable. The terrain is very varied and includes rough loose scree; temperatures on the summit can drop below -15 °C. No running shoes!
- Hard shell rain jacket and adequate rain pants
- Warm (fleece or down) top/insulation layer
- Water bottle or hydration system (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Insulating and shell gloves (may be a combination system)
- Balaclava and/or beanie and buff
- Thermal underwear and hiking socks
- Trekking shirts and pants
- Personal toiletries and medication
- Small personal first-aid kit
- Headlamp with extra batteries (needs to function for >6 hours in biting cold on summit day)
- Sunscreen, lip balm, sunglasses and hat or peak cap – we're crossing the Equator, Livingstone!

Advised equipment

- Trekking poles
- Compass (WildMedix will supply maps for exercises) and/or GPS
- Camera
- Small hiking pillow
- Gaiters
- Trail mix, hiking snacks, and lots of chocolate to share with your instructors.
- Dorland's Medical Dictionary and/or Harrison's Internal Medicine, 16th Ed.

These items are a guide; we will help you refine your kit list as the expedition approaches.

Programme/Itinerary

This program may change due to weather or operational considerations. The practical skills training and lecture program will vary according to the speed of the group's progress.

WildMedix Mountain Medicine Expedition - Mount Kenya, 2022		
Day	Description	Overnight
Program is subject to change due to operational considerations		
1	Arrival. Direct transfer from the airport in Nairobi to Chogoria Bandas	Chogoria Bandas
2	Chogoria Bandas. Lectures and basic practical training.	Chogoria Bandas
3	Chogoria Bandas. Lectures and basic practical training. Gear prep/check.	Chogoria Bandas
4	Trek: Chogoria to Lake Ellis (PM simulation exercise)	Lake Ellis
5	Trek: Lake Ellis to Lake Michaelson	Lake Michaelson
6	Navigation and Practical Training at Lake Michaelson	Lake Michaelson
7	Trek: Lake Michaelson to Simba Tarn (AM exercise)	Simba Tarn
8	Trek: Simba Tarn to Austrian Hut, skills training on Lewis Glacier in PM	Austrian Hut
9	Trek: Summit Lenana, rest in the afternoon	Austrian Hut
10	Climb: Nelion & Batian <i>or</i> Trek: Circumnavigate Peaks <i>or</i> Rest day	Mackinders
11	Training with Mt Kenya Mountain Rescue Team in the Teleki Valley	Mackinders
12	Trek: Met station for collection. Transfer to Nanyuki. Team dinner	Soames Lodge
13	Transfer to airport	





Reserving a Place & More Info

To get swift responses and chat with other interested people, join the expedition WhatsApp Q&A group at <https://chat.whatsapp.com/IZ5o5G38fzNLvdiCtkccyY>. The expedition's FaceBook event page is also a good source of continued updates: visit <https://fb.me/e/1dobd5QIa> to join the page.

If you are seriously considering joining the expedition and would like to reserve a place, you can assist us with capturing your details using this online form: <https://tinyurl.com/WMXKenya22>

Due to our commitment to providing personalised instruction and building a lasting working relationship with our expedition participants, the group size is capped. Please contact us ASAP to secure your place: Ross Hofmeyr ross@wildmedix.com +2784 549 9259 (SA Mobile)

We will provide you with details to pay a deposit, which will secure your participation. The deposit amount is USD 2000, and can be paid to our secure UK account. **Spaces are quite limited, so please make arrangements to pay the deposit soonest.**

If you are looking to establish costs for flights, we recommend using a search engine such as Momondo (www.momondo.com) or Expedia (www.expedia.com) to search for the destination airport, Jomo Kenyatta International (IATO code 'NBO'). You should plan to arrive no later than the morning of Sunday 13 March, and depart late afternoon on Friday 25 2022. We advise considering (and can assist with arranging) spending one night before and after the expedition in Nairobi to avoid stress about flight delays. Hiccups will happen – This is Africa!

Please contact us to answer any of your questions!



