

## **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 12-day Mountain Medicine Expedition on Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak and the highest freestanding mountain in the world. Kili is an excellent place to gain personal and professional insight into high altitude medicine: the mountain's reputation as an 'easy' trekking peak, the lack of technical mountaineering skills to gain the summit, and ruthless competition between tour operators aiming for the quickest turnaround on the mountain lead to one of the highest incidences of acute mountain sickness and altitude pathology in the world. As other groups trade speed against effective acclimatisation, the possibility exists that you will not only learn new skills and knowledge, but also get to apply them high on the mountain.

Over the course of the expedition, experts in the fields of mountaineering and wilderness / expedition medicine will cover topics ranging from training and preparation for the expedition medic, wilderness health and hygiene, common African infectious diseases, wilderness trauma management, high altitude physiology and medicine, backcountry and mountaineering skills as well as navigation, emergency communication and leadership.

Participants should be medical professionals – although we encourage suitably skilled volunteers – with an interest in remote and wilderness medicine, especially mountain medicine. An adequate baseline level of fitness is necessary and hiking experience is advisable, but prior mountaineering or climbing skills are not required. If you are uncertain about your suitability, please contact us for advice. We are also offering a 'trek-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 (translating into lots of time to relax!).

## **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, and start working on your backpacking fitness and endurance.

After flying into Tanzania, you will spend two nights in a lodge with view of the mountain. We will get to know the group over dinner on the first night. The next day will be spent covering a series of lectures on wilderness, mountain and expedition medicine, and sorting gear for the climb. Early on the morning of the third day we will travel to the Londorossi Park gate (2250m), where we begin our ascent of Kili, following an extended variation of the Lemosho Route.

Lemosho is ideally suited to an expedition of this calibre. The only route to approach Kilimanjaro from the west, it traverses a much more wild and remote area than the more well-frequented southern routes. It is also the longest route, traversing the great Western Plateau of Kilimanjaro, and passing the extinct Shira volcano, the oldest of the massif's three peaks. It offers the most extended time in the beautiful rainforests, giving an ideal opportunity to see wildlife. Most importantly, however, the extended duration and more gradual slopes provide ideal time for acclimatisation. Indeed, it is the only route which allows adequate acclimatisation without taking rest days in the same location, and still meet the accepted international safety guidelines on altitude acclimatisation. Uniquely, we are offering our 2018 participants the opportunity to decide on whether the group then ascends Kibo (the

main peak) via the Northern or Southern Circuits. The North is spectacularly remote, with enormous slopes looking into Kenya 3000m below, while the South is more populous but passes landmarks such as the Lava Tower and Baranco wall. Both routes allow more than 4 days above 4000m, which provides ideal acclimatisation for what comes later. As we descend and exit the park on the southern side, you will have the advantage of seeing all faces of the mountain.

For the first six days on the mountain, we deliberately walk shorter distances, making a gradual ascent to ~4700m. This leaves adequate time for practical skills training and simulation in the field, covering aspects of backcountry skills, mountaineering, navigation, communication, patient assessment and care. In the evenings, we will have short lectures and discussions on wilderness and expedition medicine topics.

On the seventh Kili day, we climb to our high camp (either Kibo or Barafu Huts, depending on the circuit) (~4700m), reaching a confluence with the southern routes. Our slow ascent and excellent acclimatisation mean that by the time we reach this point, we will be feeling very strong, and may be able to see cases of mountain sickness from the other groups both ascending and descending the mountain.

Nearly all commercial Kili expeditions make a dash to the summit and back in one day, leaving Kibo or Barafu around midnight and ascending the ~1200m vertical climb in the freezing darkness. We, however, will climb in the light, as our aim is to spend the night camped at the foot of the glaciers in Crater Camp. At ~5800m, this qualifies as 'extreme altitude,' is as high as the top of Everest's Khumbu Ice Fall, and higher than base camps on any of the Himalayan peaks. If you are looking for an opportunity to test your capabilities at high altitude, this is the perfect opportunity. However, there are other advantages: It splits the very long day spent climbing and descending the peak, which allows time to visit not only the true summit, Uhuru Peak (5895m), but also the spectacular glaciers, crater and Ash Pit with its active volcanic fumaroles. There is no way to do this without the added time and acclimatisation, making this a very special trip.

On the eighth day, we toast the sunrise on Uhuru Peak before descending right down into reassuringly thicker air, continuing down to the south over new territory to Mweka Huts (~3200m). The final day on the mountain is a spectacular descent through multiple biomes (including tropical rain forest) to our exit from the park at Mweka Gate, from where we return to the hotel 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**

The provisional cost for the 2018 Kilimanjaro Mountain Medicine Expedition is USD 4850. The expedition fee includes transfers to and from Kilimanjaro International Airport, lodge and hotel accommodation on a shared basis before and after entering the park, Kilimanjaro National Park entrance, trekking and rescue fees, temporary membership of the AMREF flying doctor service, all training, professional mountain leadership, local guide, porter and cook fees, all meals and clean water from the first evening (5 Feb) until the last morning (17 Feb), tented accommodation on the mountain with camping mattresses, group equipment, prescribed wilderness medicine and navigation textbooks for each participant (sent to you before the expedition), a certificate and badge on successful completion, commemorative headgear, a summit certificate, and WMS FAWM accreditation. A single supplement is available for the lodge/hotel, but not on the mountain for safety reasons. Flights to Tanzania, drinks, porter/guide tips, your own medical and travel insurance, as well as personal equipment are not included. A discounted fee is available to WMS members, returning WildMedix

customers and special categories of participant. Please contact us if you would like further information. Group size is limited to guarantee personal and focussed attention on all participants.

The trek-only option expedition fee is USD 4000, and includes all items except the textbooks, lectures and practical/simulation exercises, and course completion certificate.

### **Accreditation**

The expedition is accredited by the Wilderness Medical Society for FAWM and CME credits. (See [www.wms.org/fawm](http://www.wms.org/fawm)).

### **Online pre-registration**

<http://tinyurl.com/WMXKili18> (This does not commit participants yet, but will reserve participants a place).

### **Keeping up to date with details**

Like the Facebook event to be kept up to date with details:  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/857481814382590/>.