

10 Best Mountain Treks in Africa

From the Atlas Mountains of Morocco all the way down to South Africa's Drakensberg, Africa has got the best and most popular trekking destinations with Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in the continent at the top of the list.

1 MOUNT KILIMANJARO TANZANIA



Climbing Africa's highest mountain peak is not for the faint of heart. At 19,336 feet high, Mount Kilimanjaro is Africa's highest peak. Every year at least 20,000 people attempt to climb up the mountain through the 5 different climatic zones.

Situated in the Kilimanjaro National Park in Tanzania, this geological wonder is any mountaineers dream climb. There are different routes up Mount Kilimanjaro. Each route has a degree of difficulty in climbing, traffic and scenic beauty. The longer the route you take the less difficult the climbing is and the more you enjoy trekking up the mountain. The least difficult routes are Marangu and Rongai; the more difficult routes are Machame, Shira, and Lemosho. The longer routes have more difficult hiking but you'll be more acclimatized and your chances of reaching the summit are therefore higher.

Kilimanjaro National Park is rich in unique bird life, wildlife and beautiful flora. We suggest getting to know the area before your trek, as there is so much to enjoy before your climb. Due to the proximity to the equator and warm Indian ocean, much of the mountain slopes are rich areas of forest, with 195 unique bird species that call this home. As you ascend the mountainous terrain, the landscape changes from lush forest to alpine moorland, interspersed with valleys and ravines. At 4 000 meters, the landscape transforms yet again into a dry and desertous region, with interesting adapted flora. Beyond this point are pure ice caps, where little grows.

In the forested areas, you can expect to see buffalo, aardvarks, leopard, honey badger and a variety of monkeys such as the colobus and blue monkeys. The iridescent blue malachite sunbird, Hartlaub's turaco and a variety of raptors.

April and October it's the dry season on Kilimanjaro. Although there will be plenty of clouds, your ascent after a day of trekking will lead you to cloudless skies and sunshine. During this period, the wind can be very strong, somewhat inhibiting your climb. However, this is the best time to trek Kilimanjaro.

2. MOUNT KENYA, KENYA



Mount Kenya is Africa's second highest peak. It has three peaks that trekkers always target to get to as they climb up the slopes of the mountain that is covered with forest

and moorland and ice and snow. Batian is the highest peak at 5200m, just below it is Nelion peak at 5188m and at 4985m is the Lenana peak.

Remember that Lenana is the same altitude or higher than many Himalayan passes, and that altitude sickness can be a problem. Even on the shortest route to Point Lenana, trekkers should allow 3 days at the very least to allow for acclimatization on the way up. This will let you enjoy the trek even more, and improve your chances of success.

The peak area is formed from the hard core or plug of the volcano, the crater having long since been eroded away, and rises steeply on all sides some 450 m above the glaciers and scree slopes.

There is excellent rock and ice climbing of a high standard to the twin summit peaks of Batian and Nelion. The third highest peak Lenana, can be reached by any fit walker, suitably equipped.

Despite its size, it is possible to gain altitude rapidly on Mt. Kenya and overzealous climbers run the risk of high altitude sickness. Mt. Kenya is responsible for a large proportion of the world's high altitude pulmonary oedema cases (a potentially fatal form of High Altitude sickness). This can be prevented (and the experience made more enjoyable) if a sensibly slow approach is made.

January to February and July to October are the best times to go trekking on Mount Kenya.

3. ATLAS MOUNTAINS MOROCCO



Our Atlas Mountain Treks is a fantastic opportunity to trek, at altitude, in the awe-inspiring surrounds of the High Atlas Mountains, so therefore getting maximum adventure for little time away from home.

Arrive in Marrakech and stay overnight and enjoy the sights and sounds of the bustling Medina (old town) with its souks and street entertainers which really gets you in the mood for your trek ahead.

Once you start your trek you will be supported not only by your very own guide but also by a team of Muleteers who will carry your main luggage and prepare your meals during your time in the mountains.

On winter treks, you sleep in purpose-built refuges that offer a relative amount of comfort, leaving you to wake refreshed for another days trekking. On summer treks it's camping!

When you finally reach the summit Toubkal at 4,167 meters, you can enjoy unbelievable views across North Africa including the Sahara Desert and all that the impressive High Atlas Mountain Range has to offer.

Another night in the Medina after your trek and top it all off with a celebratory meal in a fantastic former palace in Marrakech; will be what you need to crown up the trek.

June through to August is the best times to go up trekking the Atlas Mountains.

4. SIMIEN MOUNTAINS, ETHIOPIA



Ethiopia has many summits in the Simien Mountains above 4000 meters. Ras Dashen which stands at 4,543 meters is the fourth highest peak in Africa.

Trekking here is fantastic not only because of the beautiful scenery, gorges and streams but also because of the endemic wildlife like the gelada baboon and Walia Ibex.

The Simien Mountains National Park lies at an altitude ranging between 3000 and 4500m. It is a relatively small slice of a huge mountain range and there is pretty much one trail that runs through it with various extensions for those with the time and energy. The trail passes along an incredible ridge and must offer the highest ratio of views to some kilometers anywhere in the world. Golden grasslands roll towards the precipitous drop and lowland mountains stretch towards the horizon. The superb wildlife is a huge feature.

Along your way trekking up you will be topping summits at Imet Gogo (3926m), Inatye (4070m) and Mount Bwahit (4,430m).

September and October provides the best time to go for trekking in the Simien's mountains.

5. THE DRAKENSBURG SOUTH AFRICA



UKhahlamba, meaning “barrier of spears” the Drakensberg, is South Africa’s highest mountain Range. Stretching for around 1000km and marking the eastern side of the Great Escarpment, the Drakensberg offer some of the best hiking opportunities in South Africa. Here can be found some of southern Africa’s highest peaks and Drakensberg hiking trips offer something for everyone, including gentle half-day hikes, longer multiple-day trips, challenging climbs and, for those with the necessary experience and equipment, technical mountaineering. Day hikes, horse riding and rock art viewing and bird watching are just but few of the things you get to enjoy doing. “The Drakensberg Traverse” a 2-3 week hikes to the giant peaks will soothe you if you got time and if you don’t have much time, try the spectacular trek from the Sentinel to the Cathedral.

Rainbow Gorge near Bergville, known as one of the most scenic day hikes in the Cathedral Peak section of Drakensberg, the trailhead is at Didima Camp and the route passes through woodland, following the Ndumeni River upstream. At the end of the 5.5km trail, you will reach the cascade that gives its name to the hike — in the right light conditions, the water tumbling down from above creates a rainbow effect. This trail is not too difficult, lasting only 2 hours and is suitable for families with children. There is a good chance of spotting wildlife, and the birdlife is especially rich.

6. MOUNT MERU TANZANIA



Though often ignored in favor of its' big sister Kilimanjaro, Mount Meru is a worthy trekker's paradise. This massive volcano towers over 3,000 meters above Arusha town, which lies at the foothills on its south side. The mountain endured a violent explosion in the distant past, and in its wake the explosion left towering cliffs in a gaping U shaped ridge facing east towards Kilimanjaro. The crater stands today in a protected amphitheater of sorts, thousands of feet below the summit rocks. The craggy top lies at the westernmost point of the summit ridge and juts boldly into the sky at 4566 meters (14,979 feet). From the top, one can look out at Kilimanjaro from the highest perch possible.... Perhaps there is no better vantage point to gaze at Africa's tallest mountain, approximately 80 km to the northeast.

What makes Mt. Meru truly special is the chance to see animals on foot, and explore the Meru Crater. This area is home to elephant, cape buffalo, giraffe, elephant, waterbuck, bushbuck, dik dik, warthog, olive baboon, Abyssinian (black & white) Colobus monkey, sykes monkey, and you may find traces of leopard, civet cat, red duiker and mountain duiker, plus a huge diversity of birds. An armed ranger joins all Mount. Meru treks, for safety. A climb to the summit is usually done in a three-night or

four-day itinerary, though it can be done more quickly. The minimum age to climb to the summit is 12 years.

January through February provide the best times to go hiking on Mount Meru as this helps you to have a clear spectacular view of the snowcapped Mount Kilimanjaro.

7. RWENZORI MOUNTAINS, UGANDA



Trekking the mystic Rwenzori Mountains National Park in Uganda is a truly fantastic and unique experience, the wonder of the high glaciers, the beauty of the valley of nine lakes, the bearded lichen hanging from giant heathers with a backdrop of rocky cliffs, crags and snowcapped peaks. The wide variety of flora and fauna with several biospheres as you ascend through different vegetation zones creates the ultimate experience for trekking. Never before has this unique and beautiful trek been available, totally untouched and undoubtedly one of the most beautiful treks in the world.

The Rwenzori Mountains is a World Heritage Site and offers the opportunity to see nature at its best. The plant life varies from heavy tropical rainforest, bamboo forests, and montane cloud forests to alpine vegetation and the scenery is truly spectacular. Above 4,500 metres the snow and glaciers add that special dimension to the wondrous views throughout this pristine mountain range.

Rwenzori Trekking Services offers a variety of trekking and climbing options from one day to twelve days to suit your style of adventure and schedule. The Rwenzori range is a true mountain range with many climbs and descents and making it a tough climb however the scenery and beautiful vegetation are incredible. The high rainfall of more

than three metres per year, the moss covered rocks, the dense vegetation, the tall peaks and cliffs towering above to the moss covered valleys and meandering streams create a 'Alice in Wonderland atmosphere' which changes through several biospheres as you climb making the "Rwenzori Mountains" a truly unique experience.

Uganda receives rainfall, almost all year round, however the months of May to July are the best times to go trekking the Mount Rwenzori.

8. MT ELGON, UGANDA AND KENYA



Mount Elgon is a huge extinct volcano on the border between Kenya and Uganda. Its name derives from its Masai name of "Ol Doinyo Ilgoon" which translates to "Breast Mountain" and was also known as "Masaba" on the Ugandan side. Wagagi in Uganda at 4,321m and Sudek in Kenya at 4,302m are the two highest peaks on the mountain. The caldera at the peak of the mountain is one of the largest in the world covering a width of about 40 kilometers.

Mount Elgon is a favorite peak in Africa. It is less crowded than Kilimanjaro, just as spectacular, and since there are less people on the slopes, you have a much greater chance of spotting wildlife. There are several waterfalls on the slopes, and there are even hot springs to soak in inside the crater! Climbing the mountain is an experience

you cannot forget just soon. However you must hire an official guide and get prior trekking information and trekking permits before embarking on your journey.

9. MOUNT CAMEROON, CAMEROON



Mount Cameroon, “Mountain of Greatness” is West Africa’s highest peak standing at 4,040 meters. The active volcano having erupted in the 2000 has several trails. Hiking and trekking tours in Cameroon give you the possibilities for observation of wild animals during tours into the rainforest or hikes on the Mount Cameroon. The oldest and steepest trail is the Guinness Trail named after an annual marathon that used to be sponsored by the Guinness Beer.

The experience of visiting this mountain would be the most attractive reason for any visitor to come and discover Fako Division and the South West region in general. The landscape of *Cameroon* is ideal for *trekking* and *hiking* trips. *Cameroon trekking* tours are conducted by Global Bush tour Cameroon.

The town of Limbe located in Fako Division hosts numerous attractions of different categories to encourage a longer stay in the destination.

Before getting up to the rocky summit, porters and guides are compulsory to guide you through the farmlands, rainforests and the savanna.

10. MULANJE MOUNTAIN MALAWI



The **Mulanje Massif**, also known as **Mount Mulanje**, is a large monadnock in southern Malawi only 65 km east of Blantyre, rising sharply from the surrounding plains of Phalombe, and the tea-growing Mulanje district. It measures approximately 13x16 miles (22x26 kilometers) and has a maximum elevation of 3,002 m at its highest point, Sapitwa Peak.

The elevation of the mountain is high enough for it to disturb upper level air flow and induce rain clouds to form around it, making it an important source of rain water at the head of almost every river that runs through this part of Malawi. The mountain itself is part of the protected Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve. The native Mulanje cypress (*Widdringtonia whytei*) has been so heavily logged that it is considered endangered and the park contains the last remaining stands of this tree, as well as a number of other plant and animal species—many of them endemic to the area. Examples include forest butterflies, birds such as the cholo alethe and white-winged apalis, a dwarf chameleon, geckos, skinks, the squeaker frog, and a rare limbless burrowing skink species which are very attractive to see when on a mountain trek. The Massif is popular for hiking and climbing, and has several mountain huts scattered across it which are maintained by the Malawi Mountain Club and the Malawi Forestry Department for hosting the visitors who

flock there every year for mountain treks. Sapitwa peak was first climbed in 1894, and is now the most popular climb on the plateau.