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Climbing for Children

An ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro

27th January – 6th February 2013

Q & A

The organising Committee of Climbing for Children has done its best to give an answer to most queries you may have. We hope that you find this document useful.

How many climbers can join the challenge?

The project is limited to 60 climbers who will be divided by Hoopoe Safaris TZ into three groups. The group will also include back up and logistical support from Hoopoe Safaris Team: one trip leader for each group of 20 climbers, one doctor for each group of 20 climbers, professionally trained Kilimanjaro guides (WFR: Wilderness First Responder and Red Cross First Aid Instructor Level), three porters per climber throughout the time on the mountain, the services of Kilimanjaro trained guides for the final ascent: one guide to two climbers.

How did you select the route up Kilimanjaro and the expedition leader?

Destiny of a Child and Safari Sun visited Tanzania in October 2009 and met with three different ground operators as well as looking at various hotels and charities in Arusha. In our opinion, Hoopoe Safaris TZ was the most professional expedition ground operator and the most safety conscious. We also identified the Machame Route as one which would give climbers a very good chance of summiting. The Kilimanjaro Climb 2011 was a great success and therefore we decided to walk on the same route again.

Who is leading us, dividing us into groups and how big are the groups?

Each group will be made up of 20 climbers. At the end of the day, everyone will meet again in the same camp and be reunited with their tent, luggage and friends. Ake Lindstrom, as the appointed leader of the expedition, is the sole decision maker in the organisation of each group, including making medical decisions, not Destiny of a Child.

Who are the guides selected by Hoopoe Safaris TZ?

Hoopoe Safaris TZ prides itself on having extremely experienced guides; they all have up to date first aid training covering all aspects of altitude sickness and due to their experience on the mountain have encountered almost all possible scenarios. The guides monitor all aspects of the climb which includes your health, pace and comfort. They all speak English and are very amenable and willing to share their knowledge on all aspects of Kilimanjaro and Tanzania culture and life. There will be a team leader who will organise the day to day logistics with the guides, making sure everything runs smoothly. Climbers will be required to act in accordance with their guides' instructions at all times.

Why do I need 3 porters? Is this not a bit excessive?

The amount of porters could be perceived as being high. This is in fact strictly regulated by the Tanzanian Government. Each porter is only allowed to carry 20 kg and each porter's bag is weighed before going up the mountain. Carrying more weight could put a porter's life in danger. Porters do not only carry your equipment. They carry mess tents, fresh food, water etc. not only for the climbers but for themselves as well. They work very hard to ensure that the entire camp is packed and set up before you arrive.

Do I have to carry a lot when climbing?

No, just a small backpack for your waterproof clothing, water, cereal bars and other snacks, camera, sun cream, lip cream, baby wipes, hat, and other personal items. The porters will carry the general equipment, including the tents, food and water, and all your other personal belongings.

What chance do I have of reaching the summit?

Hoopoe Safaris TZ has achieved a very high success rate on the Machame Route for those climbing for 7 days. Altitude sickness can prevent you from reaching the summit although it is less likely to occur where climbers take sufficient time to acclimatise. The itinerary has been planned to give the challengers a good chance of acclimatising. Hoopoe Safaris TZ will be continually monitoring all climbers for signs of mountain sickness. In the event that a climber's symptoms become severe, Hoopoe Safaris TZ may require them to descend to a lower altitude as failure to do so could result in very serious and sometimes life threatening conditions.

Should I take any medication to prevent altitude sickness?

All climbers must obtain proper medical advice from their GP as to which inoculations or medications are necessary and or advisable before climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. The use of prophylactics is likely to be recommended due to the risk of malaria.

Early symptoms of altitude sickness may include headaches, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, poor appetite and sleep disturbance. You should also discuss with your GP whether to take Diamox, a drug which can be used as an aid to acclimatisation. It can be helpful in relieving periodic breathing which can be quite disturbing and is often experienced at high altitude. However, it may have some side effects and being sulphur based may trigger an allergic reaction in some people.

How fit do I need to be?

Anyone who leads an active and healthy lifestyle should be capable of the climb. A good level of fitness is required though as the trek is strenuous and tough due to the basic facilities, high altitude and varied terrain. Much of the walking is rough underfoot. For those set on reaching the summit, do not forget the impact of temperature extremes and high altitude and do remember that you will be trekking for a number of days.

Will I get a list of the equipment needed?

Yes, Hoopoe Safaris TZ have produced a very detailed list of essential items. This will be given to all climbers in June 2012.

What type of weather can I expect?

Whilst it is possible to climb almost all year round, the weather conditions can make a big difference to your experience, notably your level of comfort and success rate. According to historical weather patterns, a January climb has "great overall conditions". However, you should be aware that in high altitude environments weather conditions are very changeable and you may experience extreme cold, high winds, snow, sleet, ice, blizzards and other extreme weather conditions.

Can I share my tent and/or the room at the hotel with the person of my choice?

Safari Sun will do its best to accommodate any requests you may have regarding the shared accommodation, but it cannot guarantee it. Tents and the twin rooms will be shared by single sexes unless otherwise requested. If you request to share with a friend/partner, we will be able to accommodate.

The cost of the project is based on two persons sharing a room. Single supplement for the hotel accommodation at a cost of \$330 is available at the time of booking. Change of mind and bookings on arrival will be charged at \$600.

How will the tour be priced?

The price of the tour will consist of two main components, namely, (i) return flights from the UK to Tanzania and (ii) the ground arrangements in Tanzania (including the cost of accommodation, local transport and the ascent up Mount Kilimanjaro). The cost of the flights will be invoiced in Pounds Sterling. The costs of all the ground arrangements will be invoiced in US Dollars. Both of them will be invoiced by Safari Sun.

Can I pay for the trip in one payment after I have paid for the flight?

Yes, you can pay in a lump sum, if you would like to take advantage of exchange rates and save on bank charges.

What can I expect to pay in additional costs?

We have included all costs such as flights, accommodation, meals, private transport, park entrance fees, tips for local guides and porters in the cost of the package. However, there will always be a few additional costs and we recommend that you budget for these at the outset. You will need to pay for your vaccinations and malarial tablets and any other medication you may require, your personal travel insurance, your entry visas into Tanzania and any costs in getting from where you live to and from the airport. Also any additional excursions will be at your expense.

Does Safari Sun have ATOL cover?

Yes. Safari Sun's Air Travel Organiser's Licence ("ATOL"), granted by the Civil Aviation Authority Number 9629 provides for the financial protection of challengers and, if applicable, their repatriation in the event of Safari Sun's insolvency. However, for this protection to apply, climbers have to book their international flights directly with Safari Sun as per the Booking Form.

What happens if I change my mind and I have already paid some money?

It is really important that you are absolutely certain at this stage that this is something you wish to do. Safari Sun will retain any payments already made by yourself to cover the costs reasonably incurred by it, including the costs of the flights, deposits on hotels and any other charges or expenses which may be unrecoverable. Further information is available in point no. 6 of Safari Sun's Booking Terms and Conditions.

What happens if I fall ill or have an emergency?

There is always a large discrepancy in people's walking abilities. This is allowed for. There will always be a guide at the back of the group to ensure that you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace. In the event that you are unable to continue for any reason, you will be evacuated off the mountain and taken to the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre in Moshi for treatment if necessary. Hoopoe Safaris TZ also carries AMREF flying doctor insurance and can arrange for you to be airlifted to Nairobi in the event of a medical emergency.

What happens financially if my climb has to be cut short due to altitude sickness or for any other reason?

Most climbers are expected to complete the challenge they undertake. However, Hoopoe Safaris TZ may withdraw a climber from the challenge at any time if the challenge leader Ake Lindstrom, is of the opinion that the climber is incapable of caring for him or herself or if the climber's presence is likely to prejudice the good order, discipline or safety of the challenge including as a result of the climber not being sufficiently healthy, fit or properly equipped to complete the challenge.

If you have to cut the climb short due to ill health or for any of the other reasons, you will not be entitled to any refund of any of the climb costs. Furthermore, any additional costs incurred as a result of this, including any accommodation, transfer and flight's costs, will be your responsibility. We advise you to take a copy of your insurance policy with you and to have a credit card to cover any such eventualities.

If I have to withdraw because of a medical condition, will I get a refund?

Please see point no. 6 of Safari Sun's Terms and Conditions which set out its policy in respect of cancellation fees. In addition, we advise you to check your travel insurance to see if you are covered in such instances.

Do I need a passport or visa?

Everyone travelling to an overseas destination will need a passport that is valid for 6 months after the scheduled date of return to the UK. Entry into Tanzania requires a visa for most nationalities, including UK citizens. The cost of the visa is currently £38.00 and can be obtained from the Tanzanian High Commission (Tel: 0207 491 3026). For further details please visit the Tanzania High Commission website at <http://www.tanzania-online.gov.uk>. Allow at least two weeks if applying by post.

Do I need travel insurance?

Each climber is required to have their own personal travel insurance (which covers all destinations on the tour, including the Machame Route on Mount Kilimanjaro) covering, amongst other things, personal accident, medical emergency evacuation and repatriation, personal liability and legal cover cancellation and curtailment of the expedition. Climbers with existing policies may need to amend them to cover the expedition as climbing Mount Kilimanjaro is regarded as a dangerous activity and as such it is often not covered under most travel insurance policies. Alternatively, climbers may wish to take out a policy with the British Mountaineering Council, which will cover the expedition: www.thebmc.co.uk. Please note that personal belongings, money and documents should also be insured if they are not already covered by your home or travel insurance policy.

How many kilos of luggage am I allowed?

When you fly Kenyan Airways to Kilimanjaro, you are allowed 46 kg per person.

It is always possible that some luggage could get lost, if this happens, Hoopoe Safari TZ will help you out with main items for the cold weather. Nevertheless, we recommend that you take your boots and anorak with you in the plane and any medication including Malarone.

Do I have to give a tip to the porters and the guides at the end of the trip?

In Tanzania tips are customary in most service industries and the mountain is no different. Hoopoe Safaris pays well compared to other operators and in comparison to average Tanzanian wages. Destiny of a Child have decided to keep tipping as transparent for the crew as possible and so we have arranged for the tip (at the rate recommended by Hoopoe Safaris) to be included in the cost. Therefore you will not have to worry on the mountain.

What type of food will I get?

On the mountain it is essential to try and eat as much as possible and to keep very well hydrated. Your body uses up to 3 times as much water whilst at altitude compared to normal. Hot drinks, cold drinks and soup are provided to keep you very well hydrated. People with special dietary requirements will be accommodated.

What is a typical menu?

Breakfast

A selection of fresh fruits
Cooked meal – eggs, sausage, tomato
Porridge
Cereal
Tea / coffee / hot chocolate

Lunch

Lunch is often taken en route in the form of a picnic lunch.
Hot soup
Sandwiches with cheese and ham or similar
Fresh vegetables
Fruit juice
Chocolate bar
Tea / coffee / hot chocolate

Dinner

Starter of soup with bread
Main course of a carbohydrate, such as rice or pasta with a meat dish, bolognese or similar
Pudding, eg banana fritters or similar
Tea / coffee / hot chocolate

No alcohol is allowed on the mountain.

What is the policy on smoking?

There are no smoking restrictions on the mountain but it is advisable not to.

Do mobile phones work climbing on Kilimanjaro?

Yes, most of the time they do. The guides liaise by radio and are in constant communication with their ground staff.

What happens to my valuables and luggage whilst walking up Kilimanjaro?

We advise you not to take any valuables or jewellery with you up the mountain. The luggage you leave behind will be stored at the Arusha Hotel.

How much spending money is it recommended to take?

At the most, \$300 and credit cards are generally accepted everywhere although there is a surcharge on credit cards. Remember that if you have to return to the hotel you will have to pay for your room.

Is it a good idea to take a camera up the mountain?

Yes. As long as it is lightweight and does not have too many extra lenses to carry. It also should be protected against freezing while not in use. A decent pouch is a good idea although an inner pocket is fine. Do not put it in your backpack.

Is the water we drink on the mountain safe?

Yes. Being hydrated is extremely important and some believe dehydration can cause altitude sickness. Hoopoe Safaris TZ supply bottled water for the first two days of the climb (so 3 litres per person per day). After that they get the water from the streams and purify by filtering and adding puritabs even though it is fine as it is.

How do we stop our water supplies from freezing at low temperatures?

The guides will be boiling the main water supplies but a small water bottle is suggested to be put in your sleeping bag next to your body particularly on the last night before summiting.

Will there be any dangerous or poisonous creatures, critters, insects, snakes etc. on the trail?

Yes. Although typically these sorts of animals will not come near us as we are a big group and the porters will be heading up the mountain before us. A guide will be in the front and another at the rear with the climbers in-between.

Will some training be organised?

This will be left to individuals but you do need to build up your fitness. Destiny of a Child will organise a couple of walks in Kent before the trip to encourage climbers to improve their fitness and meet some of the other climbers.

