

# Rwenzori Trek

## The Mountains of the Moon

Africa | 5,109m



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The legendary **Mountains of the Moon** rise abruptly from the dense equatorial rainforest of the Congo. Their highest summits reach over 5,000 metres and are permanently snow covered and glaciated. Also known as the **Rwenzori**, this remarkable range of mountains contain some of the most diverse natural habitats on earth. For the explorer they provide an unparalleled adventure playground.

Join us on a trek through this incredible place and an attempt to not only scale its highest summit, Mount Stanley (5,109 metres) but another four further summits (Mount Baker 4,842 metres, Albert Peak 5,088 metres, Mount Speke 4,890 metres and Mount Luigi di Savoia 4,640 metres) in a trekking adventure like no other.

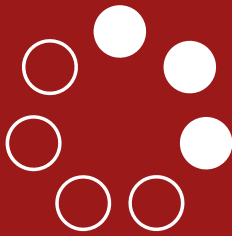
The African continent boasts some of the world's most fantastic mountains and the **Rwenzoris** – although not as well-known as [Kilimanjaro](#) and [Mount Kenya](#) – must surely rate as the most impressive. As the name of their summits suggests they have attracted many renowned explorers, now it's your turn to experience them for yourself.



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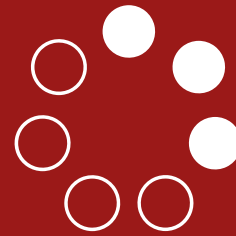
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### Physical – P3

This trip is physically tough. Frequent exercise is necessary to prepare properly for this expedition. Regular walking mixed with training at the gym to build up endurance and cardiovascular fitness is key. Expect to be able to do 8 hour days in hilly and often steep terrain, carrying a pack of 6-10kg in weight with the occasional extra long day.



### Technical – T3

May involve harder scrambling or some trekking and climbing with ropes. If snow is encountered then glacier travel with ropes, ice axes and crampons will be necessary. Basic climbing skills are ideal, but these will also be taught (and certainly practiced) during the expedition and pre-summit phase.

Please note that the grading system used is a rough guide only.





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## ITINERARY

### DAY 1 : Arrive Entebbe

We plan to arrive into Entebbe early afternoon giving us time to catch our breath and have a decent night sleep.

Flight time depending you will either have left the UK on a very early am flight or most likely you will have departed the UK the evening before on a night flight.

### DAY 2 : Transfer to Kasese

We have an early start and plan to leave at 08:00 for our transfer to Kasese, a 8 hour journey through some amazing scenery to our simple but pleasant hotel. That evening your 360 leader will give a comprehensive briefing on the days ahead.

(D)

### DAY 3 : Transfer to basecamp and trek to Sine Camp (2,596m)

We begin our trek at the Ruwenzori National Park entrance at 1,450m before entering the tall African Montane Forest. A steady climb is rewarded with sightings of forest birds and a chance of seeing blue monkeys scampering around the canopy. We might also glimpse large troupes of black and white Colobus monkeys, hear wild chimpanzee and if we are fortunate spot the extremely rare L'Hoest monkey. Adding to the sense of uniqueness is the forest itself. There is wide variety of forest trees, some festooned by Old Man's beard lichen and long jungle vines, as well as a colourful displays of flower and fungi.

Before we reach our night's camp, we encounter the impressive Enock's waterfalls which further add to what must be the most incredible start to any mountain adventure.

Sine Camp (2,596m) is a collection of small wooden cabins set between tall forest trees and on a narrow ridge from where we are rewarded from the days effort by overlooking the grandeur of the forest and a fantastic waterfall crashing over the rocks far below. Our evening is spent around the campfire chatting to our local guides about the mountains and life in their community. Our immersion into the Mountains of the Moon is complete.

(BLD)

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### ITINERARY

#### DAY 4 : Trek to Mutinda Camp (3,588m)

After a great breakfast we climb steeply out of the Montane forest and enter the bamboo forest.

In the wet season the bamboo forest is rather muddy and slippery making the going slow. However, the atmosphere and the forest is beautiful as we trace the footsteps of 18th century explorers and imagine how tough the going must have been prior to the existence of the trail. After a few hours we reach Kalalama Camp at 3,147m which is set above the bamboo forest and in the Heather-Rapanea forest. Here we'll take a rest and have a quick cup of tea or coffee. From Kalama we climb up a ridge and over several small knolls before dropping into a valley. We cross several jungle streams and pass close to moss covered waterfalls which tumble down over the rocks. Giant Heather trees whose trunks are covered in velvet moss and old man beard surround us as the trail twists and turns and we climb up the deep valley, which is often shrouded in mist.

After we arrive in camp we have a chance to climb up to the top of the Mutinda Lookout (3,925m 1-2 hours up and 1 hour down) for some amazing views across the Rwenzori Mountains and down to Kasese town and Lake George

(BLD)

#### DAY 5 : Hike to Bugata Camp (4,062m)

The trail to Bugata Camp is boggy particularly in the wet season but with a little skill we can step from tussock to tussock to make the going easier. First, we cross the Mutinda valley through the tussock grass and everlasting flowers interspersed with many Giant Lobelias, sheer waterfalls, and fantastic views of the Mutinda peaks. Next we climb a steep section up into the wide Namusangi valley and towards our camp for the night.

(BLD)

#### DAY 6 : Trek to Hunwicks Camp (3,974m)

Today we climb the 4,450m Bamwanjarra Pass from where on a clear day we get excellent views of Mt Stanley, Mt Baker, Weismanns Peak and McConnell's Prong. Today we have a good chance to observe the spectacular Malachite Sunbird as it feeds on the many lobelia flowers. The mountains we have come to climb are one step closer.

(BLD)

#### DAY 7 : Summit Mt Baker 4,842m return to Hunwicks Camp

Today we set off early to climb the first of our five summits, Mt Baker 4,842 (4-6 hours ascent and 2-3 hours descent). The ascent of Mount Baker consists mostly of scrambling up steep rock which is very exposed in places and a short section of glacier. Although Mt Baker is considered non-technical (except in the wet seasons of April-May and September-October when the rock sections become ice covered) safety ropes will always be used on the steep sections.

The views of the main summits of Magherita (the highest point of Mount Stanley), Alexandria and over Stanley's plateau, the glaciers and surrounding forest are nothing short of jaw-dropping. We take our time on the summit before descending our route back to Hunwicks camp.

(BLD)

#### DAY 8 : Trek to Margherita Camp (4,485m)

Today we initially drop into the valley below Hunwicks camp and head for the basecamp of our second and third summit of this expedition, Margherita camp. On the way we pass the stunning Lake Kitandara with its deep dark water and lush surrounding vegetation before ascending Scott Elliot pass to Margherita camp. Here we'll have an early dinner before bedding down.

(BLD)

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## ITINERARY

### DAY 9 : Summit Stanley Peak (Margherita Peak (5,109m and Albert peak 5,088m)

Mount Stanley is named after a journalist explorer, Sir Henry Morton Stanley and is the highest mountain of Rwenzori Mountains National Park, a UNESCO-recognized world Heritage Site. Mount Stanley has two twin summits plus quite a lot of lower peaks. The mountain was first climbed by Duke of the Abruzzi, J. Petigax, J. Brocherel and C. Ollier on June 18, 1906.

We wake up at 1:30am to have an early breakfast before heading off to climb the highest mountain of the Ruwenzori, Mt Stanley. The climb starts by ascending a rough trail up to the Stanley plateau from where we cross the first glacier before descending to the base of the larger Margherita glacier. The lower part of this glacier is steep, and we'll use ropes and set up belays to get on top of it. Once on the glacier we'll reach a 60-metre section of steep rock which brings us to the ridge leading to the summit of Margherita peak. From here we drop down onto a steep section of ridge which we follow up to the summit of Albert peak.

After summiting Albert peak, we descend back down to the glacier and from there walk past Lake Irene into the Bujuku valley crossing a long bog to the base of Mt Speke. Our home for tonight is the small rock shelter which the original ascensionists also used to climb this mountain.

(BLD)

### DAY 10 : Summit Mount Speke (4,890m – Vittorio Emmanuel Peak)

Mount Speke is a rugged peak characterised by many summits of which Vittorio Emmanuel is the highest. First spotted by European explorers looking for the source of the mighty River Nile and named after John Speke who never climbed this mountain but sketched it in 1862 whilst exploring the area. As a result of the high rainfall that Mount Speke creates, it is intersected by several water streams and rivers one of which does indeed flow into the Nile.

Today we climb the fourth summit of this expedition, Mount Speke directly from our bivouac shelter at its base. The ascent takes 4-6 hours and once we have reached the top, we'll descend back into the Bujuku valley then climb back over the Scott Elliot pass and descend to Hunwick's Camp at 3,974m for the night.

(BLD)

### DAY 11 : Summit Mount Luigi di Savoia (4,620m Weisman Peak)

From Hunwick's Camp we start the day by climbing up a ridge towards McConnell's Prong where we get beautiful views of the three mighty summits we have already climbed. From here we recross Scott Elliott's Pass before reaching Oliver's Pass at 4,505 metres. The trail then cuts across below Weismann's Peak to the confluence of the Nyamwamba River. The route to the summit is a non-technical and mostly on a steep well marked path. After our final summit of this expedition we descend to Kiharo camp at 3430 metres set in a deep valley with high cliffs and dense jungle..

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## ITINERARY

### DAY 12 : Descend to park entrance and Trekkers Lodge

The trail down the Nyamwamba Valley is mostly downhill and for many contains the most beautiful views of the National Park. We find oddly shaped moss covered rocks along the river and dozens of cascading waterfalls plunging into the deep valleys and forest. A finer way home would be hard to imagine. Once at the gate we'll receive our summit certificates and say a sad farewell to our local guides and friends before continuing onto the Trekkers Lodge, beer and a hearty celebration meal.

BLD

### DAY 13 : Transfer to Entebbe

We'll transfer back to Entebbe which is a bit of a long African drive! But if you have ever been to Africa, you will know they are often quite exciting with so much to see!

We plan to arrive into Entebbe in time for an evening meal and a few drinks before its off to bed!

(B)

### DAY 14 : Depart Entebbe - Arrive UK

It is time to say good buy to Uganda and hop onto a flight back home. Flight times depending you will either arrive later today or early the next day!



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## KIT LIST

### Bags & Packs

#### Kit bag

A 80-120L duffel bag to transport kit. A duffel bag is a strong, soft, weather resistant bag without wheels but with functional straps for carrying. Suitcases and wheeled bags are not suitable

#### Daysack

Approx. 30L capacity. Your day to day pack that you carry with your daily essentials, fitted with shoulder straps and importantly a waist belt

#### Waterproof rucksack cover

To protect rucksack from rain

#### Padlocks x 2

For use on your kit bag for travel and on the expedition plus your hotel bag

#### Drybags

Nylon rolltop bags that keep fresh clothing and other important items like passports and iPods dry in the event of a total downpour that seeps into your kitbag. Good for quarantining old socks. Please note that many countries are now banning plastic bags. We would always advise buying re-usable nylon rolltop bags for keeping your kit dry (and sustainability).

#### Small kit bag or light bag

This is for any kit you intend to leave at the hotel and could even simply be a heavy duty plastic bag

### Sleeping Gear

#### 4 Season sleeping bag

You should get a sleeping bag rated to -10C and choose a sleeping bag that functions within the comfort rating of this temperature. A silk sleeping bag liner will enhance this rating on the coldest nights

#### Sleeping bag liner

Silk is best for keeping the bag clean and you a little warmer

#### Sleeping mat

Full length self-inflating rather than ¾ length Thermarest

### Headwear

#### Warm headgear

This can be a warm hat, beanie, balaclava, anything to reduce the heat loss from your head

#### Wide brimmed hat

Keeps the sun off exposed areas like ears and the nape of the neck

#### Buff/Scarf

Essential for protection from the sun and dust

#### Sunglasses

Worth spending money on good UV filters. Julbo is our preferred supplier



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## KIT LIST

### Sunblock

Buy the highest SPF you can find as UV intensifies with altitude

### Lip salve

Sun cream will not work on your lips and they are very susceptible to burn without proper protection

## Upper Body

### Base layer x 2

This is the layer closest to the skin and its principal function is to draw (wick) moisture and sweat away from the skin. You can also get thermal base layers for use at higher altitudes that provide an additional insulative layer while still drawing sweat during times of high exertion

### Mid layer x 2

These are typically lightweight microfleece or similar technology that provide varying degrees of warmth and insulation without being overly bulky or heavy to pack

### Gilet (optional)

Optional - A great low volume additional layer to keep your core warm, whether down, Primaloft or fleece

### Light insulated jacket

A lighter jacket such as a Primaloft or lightweight down which can be worn at lower to mid altitudes is a great addition to your kit offering greater flexibility with layering

### Soft Shell (optional)

Optional - These should be windproof (not all are) and insulative. They are mostly made of soft polyester and sometimes resemble a neoprene finish which makes them very mobile and comfortable to wear. While offering a degree of weather repellence, they are not waterproof

### Hard Shell

Essential waterproof, windproof kit, should be big enough to fit over several other layers and breathable. Heavy and bulky ski jackets are not suitable for this expedition

### Down jacket

Generally made using feathers, these are the ultra-warm and insulated layer that are used when sitting in the tea houses or in extremely cold environments. Those with a windproof outer fabric will provide the best insulation. Ask advice in the shop (or from us) when buying the jacket and mention you want it rated to -10C and the assistant will recommend the correct fill for you

### Warm gloves

Consider liners or a light polartec pair for lower altitudes and evenings, and a thicker waterproof pair like ski gloves for higher altitudes

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## KIT LIST

### Lower Body

#### Trekking trousers

These tend to be polyester so they dry quickly after a shower and weigh little in your pack. Consider perhaps a pair with detachable lower legs as an alternative to shorts

#### Softshell trousers

Windproof or thermal lined trekking trousers for higher altitudes and the summit phase. Thermal leggings can still be worn underneath if necessary

#### Long Johns

Thermal insulation for the lower body

#### Waterproof trousers

Like the jacket, an essential piece of kit to stay dry and should also be Goretex

#### Underwear

Merino or wicking material, not cotton. How many pairs you take is entirely up to you

### Feet

#### 3-4 season walking boots

Well worn in 3-4 season waterproof boots with mid to high ankle support

#### Comfortable trainers

For evening use and to give your feet a break once we reach the lodges

#### Trekking socks x 4

Start with lighter socks lower down, working up to thicker pairs for higher up as it gets colder. Some people like a clean pair every day, others are happy to change every other day – that's a personal choice

#### Spare laces

Just in case

### Technical Equipment

#### Climbing harness

For those climbing the technical summit only.

#### Climbing helmet

For those climbing the technical summit only.

#### Crampons

12 point mountaineering crampons with anti-balling plates that fit your specific boots (not ice climbing crampons)

### Hydration

#### Water bottles/bladder

3L equivalent – Camelbaks are useful at lower altitudes but have a tendency to freeze up at higher altitudes without insulation tubes, Nalgene bottles are better at altitude. We suggest a combination of a 2L bladder and 1L bottle or 2 x ½L bottles to put in your jacket for summit night



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## KIT LIST

### Water purification

Although generally all water is boiled some prefer to double up and add purification tabs as well. Always good to have in your bag

### Toiletries

#### Wash kit

Keep it simple on the mountain. Essentials are toothbrush, toothpaste and deodorant. Moisturiser is advisable, everything else is a luxury!

#### Wet wipes

Preferably biodegradable, these are great for washing when modern shower facilities become a thing of the past

#### Alcohol gel

A must have for good camp hygiene

#### Insect repellent

For early stages and once back down

#### Toilet paper

Provided on the mountain but a spare in your daysack may be useful if you need to hide behind a rock between camps

#### Nappy sacks or dog poo bags

Only needed to bag your toilet paper if you are caught short in between camps and for keeping your rubbish tidy in your tent

### Medications

#### Personal first aid kit

The 360 med kits are designed to be used in emergencies and akin to an A&E rather than a pharmacy on Expeditions so please come prepared with useful meds for yourself such as painkillers (Ibuprofen if you can take it and a Paracetamol) plus blister plasters, plasters, antiseptic, rehydration sachets and any muscle rubs you wish to use.

#### Personal medication

Keep this in your daysack

### Miscellaneous

#### Head torch

Bring spare batteries

#### Trekking poles

These tend to be a personal preference but help with your stability and can dampen the pressure on the knees coming down hill

#### Camera

Bring plenty of spare batteries and memory cards

#### Penknife (optional)

#### Snacks

You will be fed very well and given snacks each day however we advise bringing a small selection as a little bit of comfort. Extra snacks can be bought en-route if needed. Energy gels and protein bars are not suitable

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## KIT LIST

### Entertainment

Of course optional, but most trekkers like to bring an iPod, book, Kindle, cards etc for evening entertainment.

### Documentation

#### Passport

Don't forget this! Your passport should have at least 6 months validity. With your passport expiry date at least six months after the final day of travel.

#### Copy of passport

Just in case

#### Passport photos x 4

Rarely needed but worth having just in case

#### Dental check up

We recommend you have a dental check-up before your trip. New fillings can be an issue at altitude if there is an air pocket left in the gap

### Travel insurance

Copy of own travel insurance details. And relevant contact numbers. We have a partnership with True Traveller and would recommend that you contact them when looking for travel insurance for your trip with 360. However, it is vital that you ensure that the insurance cover they offer is suitable for you, taking your personal circumstances (items to be insured, cancellation cover, medical history) into account. Many other insurance providers are available and we do recommend that you shop around to get the best cover for you on the expedition you are undertaking. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip. To include medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this trip.



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## FAQ'S

### The Technical Climbs (Stanley, Baker and Albert peaks)

#### What are the technicalities involved in reaching Stanley's (Margherita) summit?

The ascent starts from Elena hut and ascends up steep often wet/verglassed slabs to the Elena Glacier and the [Stanley Plateau](#), Africa's largest icefield. There are several possible lines that are used depending upon the conditions. From here, one has good access to the excellent SE ridge of Alexandra Peak. One can also cross the Stanley Plateau to the north reaching the tow of Alexandra's SE Ridge, drop down a steep gully to the Margherita Glacier, ascend this to the Alexandra/Margherita Col then from here ascend to the summit of Margherita Peak on snow trending left somewhat then generally wet or icy rock. The Margherita glacier is heavily crevassed, many of which are covered by a thin layer of snow. In addition, there are often wild ice formations along the way and on the adjacent ridges. At the summit, be sure to step to the West of the sign to enter the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is also possible to continue along the ridge to the west to reach Albert Peak. Descend back to the Elena hut then continue down to the beautiful [Kitandara Lakes](#) to the bivouac site below Speke peak.

#### What technical kit do we need to carry if I wish to climb the true summit?

You'll need to bring your harness, helmet and climbing boots (Sturdy, warm B1's or B2) and crampons.

The rest we provide – including ropes, carabiners, climbing and belay devices.

#### What is the climber : guide ratio for reaching the summit?

The ratio of local guides to 360 climbers is 2 guides to 4 climbers and 4 guides for 5 to 8 climbers. In addition there will be an internationally qualified 360 Guide joining every ascent.

#### What are the climbing grades of the technical routes to reach the true summit?

Mount Stanley (Margherita) peak is the most technical summit to reach on this itinerary. On the Alpine scale of difficulty this ascent is rated PD. It is a mixed climb on rock, ice and snow and requires a basic understanding of the techniques and material needed to climb on this type of terrain. This is a fully guided ascent where steep / difficult terrain is protected by ropes set up by your guide team.

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## FAQ'S

### What if I need to bail out halfway through the technical climb?

If you come to a point that you need to bail out whilst climbing the technical climb of Batian, then your climbing guide will make a plan in situ with you. Your safety will always come first and they will work a plan out with you which doesn't compromise the rest of your team's chances of continuing.

### How do we go to the loo and eat on the technical climbing route ?

You will be given a bag of summit snacks and you will find ledge to have a pause and eat.

If you need the loo you will have to go in nature .. finding a suitable spot en route!

## The Trek

### What are the highest peaks of the Rwenzori mountains?

Mount Stanley (Margherita peak, 5,109 meters), Mount Baker (4842 meters), Albert Peak (5088 meters), Mount Speke (4890 meters) and Mount Luigi di Savoia (Weisman peak, 4640 meters). The aim of this expedition is to attempt to reach the summit of all of these.

### How out of my comfort zone will I be?

On a day to day level remember that you will be camping at altitude. You are likely to be cold, washing and toilet facilities will be limited, your appetite may be affected by the altitude and as you get higher on the trek you are likely to suffer shortness of breath and many people experience difficulty sleeping. Remember that everyone on the trek is likely to be experiencing exactly the same symptoms: physical and mental.



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## FAQ'S

### How can I best train / prepare for trekking The Rwenzoris

The 360 Expeditions training programs have been devised to be expedition specific. Use these as a guide but also feel free to contact us for individual advice on how best to incorporate a suitable fitness program with your own lifestyle.

If you are struggling from day one then you will not enjoy the rest of the trip. Physical preparation does not have to be Herculean: concentrate on cardio-vascular exercise during the week by taking short runs when time allows and try to spend at least 2 weekends a month going on long duration walks (longer than 6 hrs) carrying a rucksack of around 10kg.

This kind of regime will not only prepare your body for carrying minor loads but will harden your body against the big days on the mountain itself. In addition it will help break in your boots and get you used to your equipment. In combination this will pay dividends when you reach Mount Kenya because even though you can't train for altitude your body will be ready for arduous days and you will be familiar with how to best use your equipment, both adding to you being able to enjoy and appreciate the mountain all the more. Summit day can be up to 9 hours long.

### Food and Water

#### What is the food like on the mountain?

All meals on the mountain are of the highest possible standard. In fact considering that our cooks have to produce the best possible meals in a wilderness setting using only the most basic of facilities (kerosene stoves) the meals they produce are nothing short of a miracle. The meals are always fresh, nutritious and varied. We ensure that dietary preferences are always met and that the best local ingredients are used. The underlying aim is to provide balanced nutritional meals packed with carbohydrates to re-fuel hungry bodies and to replenish stores for the next day of activity. On top of well balanced meals clients are provided with coffee, tea and snacks upon arrival into camp. The morning wake-up call is usually accompanied with a cup of tea or coffee in your tent.

You are invited to bring along any of your favourite snacks and goody bags from home if they want. Concentrate on high energy food-stuffs such as Jelly Babies to give you that little boost on an arduous day.

#### I have food allergies, can these be catered for?

Absolutely, please inform the office of any allergies or intolerances and we will ensure that these are taken into account on the trek.

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### Where does the drinking water come from?

Water comes from the fresh water streams in the mountain. The porters draw it using jerrycans and deliver it to the Camp.

There is no bottled water on our treks, all water is taken from streams and purified, so you'll need to bring should water purifiers to purify at least 3ltrs a day. We do boil water at night for teas and coffee, so you can fill up your water bottles the night before with boiled water.

## Accommodation

### What is the accommodation like on the trek?

All accommodation during the trek is in huts with bunk beds dormitory style and mattresses. Unfortunately we can't provide twins or singles for during the hike as the conditions are tough to build huts and we have a policy of conserving the mountain environment hence less destruction of nature, but we endeavour to provide as much comfortable accommodation as we can. All you need is a warm four season sleeping bag.

### Will the toileting facilities will be "Au naturel", or pit latrines?

In the camps on the trek there are pit latrines which are cleaned regularly.

### Can I get a single room supplement when in town?

At the hotels before and after the trek, yes it's possible to have a single room. During the trek it is not possible. The wooden cabins at the camps are shared with 8 people in every hut.

The 360 Office team will be more than happy to organise a single room supplement.

### Why aren't hotels in Entebbe included?

We haven't included hotels in Entebbe due to many variations of flight schedules.

## Health and Safety

### What is the risk level with fighters from nearby conflict zones?

There have been no sightings of DRC fighters in this area for almost a decade. The Uganda Wildlife Authority carries out patrols of the route plus the UPDF carry out daily patrols of the borders of Uganda to Congo. Then there's the geographical barrier in terms of terrain of the Rwenzori Mountains on the DRC side. The Rwenzori Mountains are incredibly steep on the Congo side which significantly helps the safety of this region.

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## FAQ'S

### What happens if there is a problem on the mountain?

All our guides are in communication by satphone or mobile phone where there is reception. In the vast majority of cases of emergency rescue the problems can be attributed to altitude and if so the solution is immediate descent to lower altitudes. Our local mountain crew are all experienced in dealing with any problems that arise. Our guides are qualified with the highest standard of wilderness first aid qualifications and can handle any emergency to the highest level of competency.

### Am I likely to suffer from altitude sickness on this expedition?

Although our acclimatisation regime ensures that everybody enjoys the best possible chance of getting high on the mountain, altitude related problems can happen. The most common of this is high altitude sickness – AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness). Symptoms for this can include headaches, nausea and vomiting.

In all this sounds quite dramatic but generally this is just the process your body naturally goes through to adjust to the higher altitudes and the reduced partial pressure of the atmosphere. For some people the acclimatisation process is a little longer and harder than others.

For our guides this is all part and parcel of ascending a near 5,000m peak and, although we assess each client's personal situation carefully, we also further consider the compounding effects of dehydration brought on by excessive vomiting and continuing headaches.

AMS might sound frightening but our guides are fully trained (and experienced) in helping to relieve your personal symptoms and provide advice on how to best proceed.



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## FAQ'S

### What can I do to help prevent AMS?

In most cases AMS can be avoided by following these guidelines:

- Drink lots of water
- Walk slowly
- Stay warm
- Eat well

We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the various affects that altitude can cause. During your pre-climb briefing, we describe altitude sickness to you in detail, and advise you how to cope with it. The most important thing is not to fear it, but to respect it and to know how to deal with it and more importantly tell your guides how you feel. Our guides have seen every condition that the mountain produces, and they will always know how to deal with problems. 360 ascends the mountain on the Kilembe Trail. This is a longer route which greatly reduces the incidences of AMS developing.

### Is there a risk of getting HACE (High Altitude Cerebral Edema) and HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema) on the mountain?

HACE and HAPE rarely occur in the Rwenzoris but our guides are fully trained in the recognition of the onset of these problems and will deal with them at the first sign of their development.

### Should I bring Diamox on the expedition with me?

Although we recommend you come armed with a course of Diamox or other high-altitude drug on this expedition, we do not recommend that take you these as a prophylactic during the trek or climb. We view Diamox as a treatment drug rather than a preventative medicine. Most adventure medics give similar advice, however we do appreciate this can be confusing, as many GPs (who aren't necessarily mountaineers) do suggest taking it as a prophylactic.

We pride ourselves on designing all our itineraries with acclimatisation very much front and centre and this expedition itinerary has been carefully designed to allow for your body to adjust to the altitude gradually, safely and comfortably. However, if you find that you are still having problems adjusting to the altitude (see our FAQ on Altitude Sickness) then your expedition leader or expedition medic will recommend the correct course of action regarding taking Diamox.

# Rwenzori Trek

The Mountains of the Moon | Africa | 5,109m

## FAQ'S

### Should I take Diamox?

It is far preferable to take Diamox if and when needed during the course of the expedition. If you are already taking it and then start having altitude related problems you are left with few options but to descend to a more comfortable altitude which sadly often means that the summit is not attainable.

Furthermore, Diamox is a diuretic, meaning you will have to drink a lot of fluid to prevent dehydration. Of course, the upshot of this is you'll have to pee more which means you'll probably be having to get up more in the night and take cover behind rocks during the day. Another quite common side-effect is that it can cause your extremities to "buzz and tingle" including your fingers, toes and lips which can feel quite unsettling. Other side-effects can include dizziness and light headedness with loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. Although all these side-effects are manageable when you have symptoms of altitude sickness, we personally believe it is counter-intuitive to take it unless necessary.

Of course, it is totally up to you, this is just our recommendation and we're not doctors. If you do decide to take Diamox on the advice of your doctor then please do let your leader know in situ so they are aware of this. We also suggest you take the drug for a couple of days a few weeks before travelling so you can experience the symptoms before taking them during the trek.

### Do I need to take Malarial drugs?

The Malaria protozoa generally does not survive over an altitude of 1,500m so once you start the actual Rwenzori trek Malaria poses no threat. We personally do not take them. However, in Kasese/Entebbe we recommend liberal use of repellent and hotels have mosquito nets on the beds.

We recommend that you visit your Doctor or travel clinic before departure for the latest advice. If you are extending your stay in Uganda to visit other areas then you should take them.



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## FAQ'S

### **You advocate taking a small first aid kit, what should it contain?**

We advocate a little bit of self-help on the mountain. If you have a blister developing for example then please stop take off your boot and treat it before it becomes a problem.

Your own first aid kit should contain: a basic blister kit, plasters, antiseptic, sun-protection, your own personal medication (sometimes your porter might get to camp after you and if he is carrying your medication you may not be able to take it according to the regime you are used to), basic pain relief (aspirin and Ibuprofen), a personal course of antibiotics if prone to illness. Foot powder in your socks every morning is great for preventing blisters.

Generally the best approach to take when packing your first aid kit is to include such basic medications as if you would on a family or personal holiday.

Your 360 expedition leader and / or a local porter (we call the ambulance man!) carries a very comprehensive first aid kit which contains a wide range of supplies and medications. They are fully trained to use whatever is needed for any emergency that may arise. We advocate keeping this in mind when packing your own first aid supplies and keeping your own FA kit as compact and light as possible.

### **What vaccinations do I need?**

The following vaccinations are recommended:

- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid
- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Polio

Yellow Fever (see below)

This list is not absolute and it is important you should see your GP Surgery or travel clinic for latest recommendations and to ensure you are up to date on necessary vaccinations.

### **Do I need to have a yellow fever certificate?**

Yes, a Yellow Fever Vaccination Certificate is required for all travellers above 1 year of age. If you have an International Vaccination Certificate, it should be carried with you. This certificate shows which inoculations you have had and when. A Yellow Fever Vaccination is valid for life so if you have a certificate make sure you bring it with you. If you have not had a Yellow Fever Vaccination ask at your GP surgery or Travel Clinic about getting vaccinated.

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## FAQ'S

### What happens if I need to leave the expedition early?

If a climber needs to leave early, arrangements can be made with the assistance of our 360 Guide. Additional costs (transport, hotels, flights etc.) will be incurred by the climber but our guides will be able to assist in every detail of your departure.

### What happens if there is a problem on the mountain?

All our guides are in communication with each other by phone and radio. In the vast majority of cases of emergency rescue the problems can be attributed to slow acclimatisation or altitude and if so the solution is immediate descent to lower altitudes. Our local crew is very experienced in dealing with any problem that may arise. Our guides possess the highest standard of wilderness first aid qualifications and can handle any emergency to the highest level of competency without assistance if necessary.

### What are the emergency procedures in the Rwenzori?

It is mandatory that all our climbers have insurance covering them for the mountain trek.

In case of any emergency, all huts are equipped with stretchers, and all teams are equipped with a first aid kit and a satellite phone.

The 360 Guide will analyse the situation and call the 360 office to inform them of the nature of the emergency whilst developing an in situ evacuation plan. The 360 office will contact the travel insurer. Often the first response for an evacuation, where a climber cannot walk is for the porters to stretch the casualty down the mountains. Our local team can usually achieve this within hours and once at the park gate the casualty will be brought by vehicle to Integrated Medical services in Kasese for hospital first-aid. Please note that rescue by stretcher on foot comes at a cost which should be covered by insurance. There is an airstrip in Kasese town in case your insurance company deems it necessary for the climber to fly to Kampala for better medical facilities.



# Rwenzori Trek

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## FAQ'S

### Kit

#### What clothing should I wear on the mountain?

We advocate the beg, steal and borrow principle for first timers instead of buying brand new stuff that may never get used again. The cost of equipment is usually a major deterrent for people coming onto trips in the first place.

Our guides usually start the walk wearing long, lightweight trekking trousers and T-shirts. Long trousers are recommended as a deterrent to insects, stinging plants and to act as sun protection. Shorts can also be worn on the initial few days of the trek as the temperature is usually warm. Ensure that you apply sun-protection frequently!

The prevailing conditions on the mountain will dictate what you will wear: if it is cold when you leave the camp in the morning then wear a fleece. As things warm up take advantage of the zipper system which most trekking clothing has and open and / or close the zips to adjust to your own preferred temperature. If you get too warm simply take a layer off.

Waterproofs are needed at all times. Mount Kenya is a big mountain that creates its own weather system. It is not unusual to be caught out in an afternoon rainstorm low down on the mountain. Waterproofs should be Gortex material or similar.

#### What do your guides wear on summit day?

On summit day it gets cold and temperatures of -10 to -15 C are not unusual.

Typically our guides wear 2 sets of base layers (Long Johns) a fleece layer (top and bottom) and then on the legs waterproofs whilst on the upper torso a down jacket is often worn. If the wind picks up near the summit ridge our guides will put on their wind proof layer to ward off the wind-chill. On their hands they'll wear a thin layer of working gloves over the top of which is a thicker set of "ski gloves" or mittens.

Their heads are covered by a thermal "beanie" hat and the hood of their down jackets. On their feet the guides wear one pair of thin socks and one pair of thick socks.

On summit day Guides use waterproofs as an invaluable wind shield to protect themselves against wind-chill when a strong wind blows.

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## FAQ'S

### What is the best type of footwear to use?

Because of the huge variety of terrain encountered when ascending this mountain it is very important to wear the right footwear. Boots should be sturdy, waterproof, insulated against cold temperatures and offer adequate ankle support.

In addition it is highly recommended that your boots are well worn in to prevent the formation of blisters. A range of suitable boots are on the market and further advice as to which brand names are available can be found online or at your local gear store. When in-store try lots of boots on, use the ramps in the shops to test their traction, make sure they are comfortable as you will be almost living in them for days on end and they are very important.

For the ascent of Stanley, Baker and Speke peaks crampons are likely to be worn. it is an advantage to have crampon compatible boots (B2) for which you have your own crampons. Alternatively sturdy, waterproof, insulated B1 boots work with "non-technical crampons.

### What should I carry inside my daysack?

A daysack is worn by the client at all times during the trek. The content of this is mandatory and should include: a fleece (for when taking breaks or weather changes) a full set (top and bottoms) of waterproofs, sufficient water for the day, snacks, camera equipment, personal medication and a head torch.

### What do the porters carry? What is the correct porter weight?

Your day to day sack should weigh no more than 3 – 4 kg and a rucksack of around 30L capacity will more than suffice. This rucksack can be filled to brim with extra stuff when checking in at the airport. It is important that this bag has an adjustable waist belt to transfer the weight of your daily load onto your hips and from here onto your legs (your strongest muscles) to do most of the carrying.

Your porter bags should be off a soft material "duffel bag" or rucksack variety and should not be a suitcase or hard bodied metal case. Furthermore they should weigh no more than 12-14 kg when packed for the mountain. On all our previous East African expeditions we have found this weight to be ample and usually everybody can plan to take only enough clothes and equipment needed for the mountain. Please bear in mind that park regulations restrict porters only carrying 20kg and that on top of your load porters will also have to carry a share of the food, kitchen equipment, camping equipment and their own survival gear.

Inside the porter bag should be a change of clothing, your clothing for higher up the mountain, a sleeping mat (thermarest), sleeping-bag, personal toiletries etc. (see equipment list).

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## FAQ'S

### Are down jackets necessary?

They are highly recommended and are often worth their weight in gold on summit day. Our guides wear them on all evenings from the first camp up. A layer system comprising of several layers of base layers, fleeces, and a thick jacket will suffice on most summit nights but nothing beats the efficiency of a good down jacket (especially when topped with a water proof layer).

### How warm does my sleeping bag need to be?

Should be rated within the -10C comfort zone. From the first camp upwards it is not unusual to experience frosty nights and a good night's sleep is important to giving you the best chance to climb this mountain. Ensure you get a sleeping bag that has this temperature rating at this comfort zone rather than as its extreme zone.

Our guides take sleeping bags rated to well below -10C to ensure that they are warm at night. 3 – 4 season sleeping bags can be enhanced by using an inner silk sheet (or similar). The idea is to be as comfortable and warm as possible for the night and henceforth to ensure plenty of sleep for the arduous days ahead. It is important to remember that down sleeping bags work by your own body heating the down that's inside the bag.

Once you have warmed up the bag the down will retain the heat and ensure that you sleep at a temperature that's your own body temperature. For best results it is best to wear as little as possible when inside your sleeping bag. Our guides will often only wear a set of thermals in their bag. It is important for the bag to trap the heat. By wearing multiple layers of clothing your clothing will trap this heat and your bag will not function properly.

### Is it possible to rent equipment before I go?

You can rent equipment from [www.outdoorhire.co.uk](http://www.outdoorhire.co.uk).



# Rwenzori Trek

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## FAQ'S

### **What clothing is suitable for when we come back from the mountain?**

Uganda straddles the equator and daytime temperatures are warm. When in Rome do as the Romans. Shorts and T-shirts are fine to wear when in Kampala or Entebbe. Evening wear generally tends to be casual: long trousers and casual shirt are fine for all hotels and restaurants.

Ugandans are generally quite conservative in their dress code and are generally well dressed despite their situation in life. Your town and party clothes can be left in a safe lock up and will not need to be taken up the mountain.

## The Weather

### **What is the best time of the year to climb the mountain?**

It's important to note that the Rwenzori mountains are increasingly being affected by climate change and that the seasons keep changing. Generally, it rains about 320 days a year. Late December to early March receives less rainfall than the preceding months although some showers may still occur. June through to October are also good as the daytime conditions are generally cooler but clear.

### **How cold can it get?**

The temperature at the top of the mountain can vary widely. Sometimes it is only a degree or two below freezing, but visitors should be prepared for possible temperatures as low as minus 15 Celsius, especially in conjunction with wind chill.

### **What happens if there is a lot of rain on the trek/climb?**

Although we only schedule our expeditions at the optimal time, during the dry season there is a significant chance of rain. It is this natural force that shapes these mountains and allows for their unique eco systems to develop. We prepare for rainy days by always having waterproof clothing handy and by staying in huts rather than camping. Your guides will dictate what will happen for the ascent phase of this expedition should an unreasonable amount of rain / snow make the climb more difficult and if deemed too dangerous.

## Travel

### **Do I need to book my own flights to Uganda?**

360 Expeditions will be booking flights on your behalf. We provide confirmation of flight times and departure terminal approximately three weeks before your departure date. Please be aware that flight schedules are subject to change. Please ensure that you have checked flight details before setting out for your flight.

# Rwenzori Trek

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## FAQ'S

### Insurance

#### Do I need special travel insurance for the trek?

You must carry individual travel insurance to take part in the expedition. We cannot take you on the mountain without proof of insurance.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip. To include medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this trip.

Your insurance details are requested on the booking form, however this can be arranged at a later date. 360 Expeditions will be requesting your insurance details 8 weeks before your departure.

#### What insurance do I have to have for the technical summit?

You must have insurance that covers you for high altitude multi climbing that takes you to the height of 5000m+ mountains.

### Entry into Country

#### My passport runs out 3 months after the trek, is this OK?

Your passport should be valid for 6 months after the date the trek starts. If it runs out before you may be refused entry. It is also advisable to have a couple of photocopies of your passport in case of loss.

#### Do I need a visa for Uganda?

Yes, all travellers are required to have a visa before travelling to Uganda.

You can apply for a visa at the Ugandan High Commission in London or [apply online for an 'e-visa'](#). You can find full details of how to apply on the website of the [Ugandan High Commission](#) in London. You should give yourself sufficient time to apply for a visa and make sure when applying that the start date and validity covers the period you wish to travel.

You can also apply for an East African Tourist Visa. This is valid for 90 days and allows multiple entry into Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. You can apply for this visa on the ['e-visa' website](#).

### Finance

#### When is the money due for this expedition? What kind of payment do you accept?

Generally speaking deposits are due upon booking as we need to book your international flights well in advance. The full amount should be paid 4 months prior to departure. However having said this, our aim is to get you to the top of this mountain and we understand that personal financial situations can vary.

Please contact our friendly office crew to discuss a suitable payment plan should you find raising the funds to be difficult. We have after all been in your shoes and go by the motto of where there's a will there's a way.

# Rwenzori Trek

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## FAQ'S

### **What is your cancellation policy? What is your refund policy?**

Please read our terms and conditions carefully before you book. We highly recommend trip cancellation insurance for all expeditions. Due to the nature and heavy costs of government and operator permits we must adhere to a strict refund policy.

### **How much do we tip our local crew?**

Our local crew work extremely hard to ensure that your expedition runs well. While tipping is not compulsory, it is very much ingrained in the Ugandan culture. Once someone sees the hard work the crew provides and realises the small amount of money they get paid relative to your own income, tipping will seem the least you can do to say thank you. We suggest a minimum of \$200-250 dollars is given per trekker that will be then split across the team.

### **Money: am I correct in thinking we only need to take American Dollars with us?**

American dollars are readily recognised and easily converted to the local currency at banks. Upon arrival there will always be a bureau de change at the airport as well as lots of ATMs that will give you Ugandan Shillings. Once away from the airport you will need Ugandan, very few places will accept dollars except the bigger souvenir shops or your hotel, and they will not offer you a great exchange rate.

### **What additional spending money will we need?**

The amount of money you will need depends on how many presents you wish to buy or how much you wish to drink when you come off the hill. As a basic rule of thumb \$200 USD should be more than adequate for any post expedition spending. Kenya is a relatively cheap place and when indulging in the local custom of haggling then goods can be very good value for money.

Your 360 leader will be happy to point out the relative bargains and the suitable prices plus where to get the best value for money. The only cash you'll need to consider taking with you on the mountain is the local crew tips which are presented to them before you sign out from the national park.

## Electronics

### **Will I be able to charge my camera/phone battery on the trek?**

Opportunities to charge your batteries will be limited. If you can get hold of a solar battery charger this is probably the best option. Also make sure that you keep your spare batteries warm i.e. by keeping them near your body day and night.



# Rwenzori Trek

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## FAQ'S

### **Is there mobile phone reception on the trek?**

In Uganda, telephones and internet access are readily available in town. Our guides will carry satellite phones in the mountains. Mobile reception on the mountain is sporadic, but the locals know all the best spots to pick it up.

### **Do we need a travel adaptor for the plug sockets in the hotel or are they the same as UK?**

The voltage is 220v / 50Hz like the UK. Rectangular or round three-pin plugs are used.

## General

### **Will my valuables be safe?**

While we will do everything we can to provide adequate safety for the group and security for your possessions, the general rule is that if you don't need it, don't bring it. This includes jewelry, necklaces, rings and even watches. Your passport and money should be kept on you at all times.

As with travel in any foreign country, you need to look after yourself and your possessions, and this is no different.



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## TRAINING PROGRAM

To begin 6 months prior to the expedition where possible.

1. CVS: Cardiovascular exercise which is low impact such as swimming, cycling, cross trainer, rowing.

2. Weekend walk should be done over undulating terrain. Only a light rucksack needs to be carried.

3. For specific exercises it is worth doing static squats and heel raises on a regular basis to improve leg muscles prior to the trip. Static squats are especially useful to help protect the knees. Please remember that it is still important to have a well balanced workout using a variety of muscle groups.

4. It is worth winding down and resting in the week leading up to the trip, doing several light walks to keep things going.

5. When walking going at a pace of a brisk walk with a light sweat and enough to feel breathless is recommended

6. During the program, rather than step up suddenly each month (example, going for 3 one hour walks each week during the weekdays in April to 3 one and half hour walks suddenly in May) it is better to build up gradually each week so there isn't a large transition (example, going for 3 one hour walks during week 1 in April, going for 3 one hour and ten minute walks during week 2 in April, going for 3 one hour and fifteen minute walks during week 3 in April, going for 3 one hour and twenty minute walks during week 4 in April)

6. It is important you seek medical advice prior to starting any training program, especially if you are not used to regular physical exertion

All the best with your training!

### MONTH 1

#### OPT 1

2 x 30 mins weekday walk  
1 x 1 hour weekend walk  
1 x 10 mins CVS

#### OPT 2

1 x 30 mins weekday walk  
2 x 1 hour weekend walk  
1 x 10 mins CVS

### MONTH 2

#### OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk  
1 x 2 hours weekend walk  
2 x 10 mins CVS

#### OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk  
2 x 2 hours weekend walk  
2 x 10 mins CVS

### MONTH 3

#### OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk  
1 x 2 hours weekend walk  
2 x 10 mins CVS

#### OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk  
2 x 2 hours weekend walk  
2 x 10 mins CVS

### MONTH 4

#### OPT 1

3 x 1 hour weekday walk  
1 x 4 hours weekend walk  
3 x 15 mins CVS

#### OPT 2

2 x 1 hour weekday walk  
2 x 4 hours weekend walk  
3 x 15 mins CVS

### MONTH 5

#### OPT 1

3 x 1.5 hours weekday walk  
1 x 5 hours weekend walk  
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

#### OPT 2

2 x 1.5 hours weekday walk  
2 x 5 hours weekend walk  
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

### MONTH 6

#### OPT 1

3 x 2 hours weekday walk  
1 x 6 hours weekend walk  
3 x 30 mins CVS

#### OPT 2

2 x 3 hours weekday walk  
2 x 6 hours weekend walk  
3 x 30 mins CVS





*"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty & well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out & loudly proclaiming 'Wow! What a Ride!' "*

**Dream it. Plan it. Live it.**