

13 Days Rwenzori Trekking Midrange

Tour highlights

- 1. Trekking through one the most beautiful Mountain Areas worldwide**
- 2. Climb up to Magherita Peak**

Day 1 - Arrival in Entebbe

Your Manya Africa Tours guide will pick you up at the airport and drive you to your guesthouse. Depending on your arrival time you can discover Entebbe with the second largest Lake in the World: Lake Victoria. You can visit the Botanical Gardens with many types of Primates and amazing birdlife. After a short briefing, enjoy the night before the start of your exciting *Africa-Adventure-Tour* starts.

Overnight at The Boma Guesthouse Entebbe (BB)

Day 2 - Entebbe - Rwenzori Mountains National Park

After a good sleep and a fortifying breakfast, we head in direction of West Uganda. You will see many plantains, swamps and bush land towards Mubende, where we stop for a lunch break (own costs).

Today's destination is Kasese near the Rwenzori Mountains National Park. You will reach your accommodation in the afternoon when, if there is time you can enjoy walks around the area.

Overnight in Hotel Magherita (B, D)

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Days 3 to 11

NINE DAY TREK to Margherita Peak 5,109 metres

Margherita Peak is Africa's third highest peak; however the real beauty is in the climb up the Kilembe route. The forest and valley flora is diverse with trees and valleys of ferns. The trees are alive with many species of birds and primates and as you walk up the trail you will see chimp nests high up in the tall trees; if you are lucky you may catch a glimpse of a resident chimpanzee as they scamper away. Climbing Margherita Peak is more of a hard scramble than a climb, except for a few difficult moves. When it snows it is more difficult; however, the rewards and exhilaration of reaching the top is enormous as you look across Albert Peak to the DRC (Congo) then east across the spectra of the Rwenzori Mountains.

We provide all the equipment necessary for the climb: crampons, ropes, harnesses, and carabinas. You need to bring good hiking boots, warm clothing, a warm sleeping bag and rain gear. We do also hire sleeping bags.



Day 1: Kyanjuki – Sine Hut

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Steady walk with a steep climb for the last kilometer. Start at Trekkers at 1,450 meters and sleep at Sine Hut at 2,596 meters: height gain of 1,146 meters.

For those who want a bigger challenge and add in a climb to Mutinda Lookout at 3,975 metres - which is directly above Mutinda Camp 3,688 metres - you may continue to Kalalama Camp at 3,147m. This will they give you ample time to climb Mutinda Lookout in the afternoon and enjoy the views plus acquire better acclimatization for higher altitudes. The climb takes about 40 minutes to one hour

Guides generally brief clients at the start of the trek or the night before.

The trek starts at Trekkers Hostel in Kyanjuki, which is situated 1,450 meters above sea level and 12 kilometers from Kasese. It is best to start by 9 am but may leave as late as 11am. You walk 2.2km to the UWA rangers post at 1,727 meters, which takes about one hour. Here you pay the gate entrance fee and the rangers brief you on the rules of the National Park.

We start by walking up the valley floor through tall forest trees of the Afro Montane Forest Zone. This is a steady climb with multitudes of birds and a chance of seeing a wild chimpanzee or blue monkey scampering off through the forest. At times visitors may see troupes of 15 to 20 Colobus monkeys scampering through the tree tops. There are rare sightings of the L'Hoest monkey which are one of the Bukonzo cultural emblems, protected by the virtue of the King or *Omusinga*. There is a wide variety of plant species from forest trees to bamboos thickets, low shrubs, flowers, fungi, with many moss and lichen covered vines hanging from the tall trees creating an awesome appeal. Enock's Falls are just 200 meters from Sine Hut and offer a splendid opportunity to capture a great screensaver for your memories.

The 10-bedded wooden hut is set between tall forest trees on a narrow ridge. On the large verandah you may sit and enjoy the beauty of the Afro Montane forest while you look down at a fantastic waterfall crashing over the rocks far below. Sine is just below the bamboo zone and the area around has many different bird species.
Sleep at Sine Hut 2,585 metres.

Day 2: Mutinda Camp

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After a good breakfast, trekking starts at 8.30am and you soon enter the Bamboo-Mimulopsis Zone which is a steep climb with many high steps. In the wet season the bamboo area is rather muddy and slippery, making the going slow. However the atmosphere and the forest is beautiful as you climb 551 metres altitude and a distance of 1.8km to Kalalama Camp at 3,147 meters which is in the Heather-Rapanea Zone. Here you can take a rest and enjoy a quick cup of tea or coffee before heading on to Mutinda Camp. The trail meanders up and over several small knolls along a ridge top then drops down the side of the valley before climbing again, and in doing so crosses several small streams, passing close to moss covered waterfalls. You then climb steadily along the side of a beautiful mossy river which tumbles down over the rocks under the Giant Heather trees whose trunks are covered in green moss with old man beards (*Usnea lichen*) hanging from the branches. The trail twists and turns as you climb up the deep valley, which has an enormous variety of plants and flowers. This valley is unique with many Giant Heather trees creating a beautiful atmosphere, often shrouded in mist. Eventually you get to Mutinda Camp which is set near a small river that drops off a waterfall and offers a chance to wash, refresh and relax or, you may wish to climb up to the top of the Mutinda Lookout (one and a half hours up and one hour down). The view and the atmosphere are amazing as you stand on moss covered rocks at 3,925 meters with views across the Rwenzori Mountains, down to Kasese town and Lake George.

Note:- During the summer of 2011/2012 from December to late March there was a unprecedented dry spell and on the 9th February 2012 a large fire burnt across much of the alpine area of the Rwenzori Mountains. Fortunately, due to the high rainfall, the vegetation is recovering, and the mosses are again growing on the rocks and cliff faces. The worst affected area is above Kiharo Camp where there was a large forest of Giant Heather trees, which are now blackened sticks; however, the area still holds a beauty with towering cliffs and small areas unaffected by fire along the valley floor with the deep green of fresh shoots and vegetation, bringing new life to the mountains. All of the tussock grass, Giant Groundsel, has regrown and the Malachite Sunbirds are feeding on the flowers of the Giant Lobellias. Kiharo Camp has been moved below the burnt area and is particularly beautiful with many birds, animals, rock hyrax and several species of rare chameleons, some have been found living at altitudes of 3,650 metres. The affected areas are between Mutinda and Bugata Camps on day 3 and on the way down from Bugata Camp to Kiharo Camp. We have since shifted Kiharo Camp down

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the valley a little so as to be in an area not affected by the fire. Since the dry spell we have been experiencing heavy rains throughout and the vegetation and mosses are regenerating much faster than expected.

Day 3: Bugata Camp

4.9 km starting at 3,688 meters climbing to 4,062 meters.

Alpine Zone. The trail here is boggy, particularly in the wet season but with a little skill you can step from tussock to tussock to make the going easier. You cross the Mutinda valley through the tussock grass and everlasting flowers interspersed with many Giant Lobelias before climbing a steep section up to the Namusangi Valley (3,840 meters), which ends abruptly with sheer waterfalls and fantastic views of Mutinda Peaks. The Namusangi Valley is wide, with many ups and downs and crossing several bogs as the trail climbs steadily to Bugata Camp at 4,062 meters. Bugata Camp is situated way up Bamwanjara Pass high above Bugata Lake with views across Lake Kopello to Weismann's Peak, which is often covered with snow; from here you have valley views of Lake Africa and Lake Kanganyika and the many small peaks towards Mutinda Camp. The area is covered with tussock grass, everlasting flowers (*Helichrysum*), St John's Wort (*Hypericum becquaeritii*), giant groundsel (*Senecio adnivalis*) and Giant lobelia (*Lobellia gibberoa*). There are many Red Forest Duiker (*Cephalophus nigrifrons rubidus*) which are a sub-species only found in the Rwenzori Mountains. In the past they have been very hard to see due to the thick vegetation but since the fire, which burnt across the alpine region of the Rwenzori Mountains, they are now easier to see in the new shorter growth.

In the dryer season you may choose to walk directly up the valley but a more scenic trail meanders along the hilltops with fantastic views of Lake Nusuranja from Plozza Rock. From Plozza Rock you also get fantastic views down the valley of nine lakes ringed by rugged peaks and ridges.

Bugata Camp has good facilities, solar lights, good toilets and bathrooms where the guides may prepare some warm water in a basin for you to wash. Bugata also has a heli pad (GPS reading N 18.312 E29 53.457) in case of any need for rescue by helicopter.

Day 4: Bamwanjara Pass

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6.2 km starting at 4,062 meters climbing over 4,450 meters sleeping at 3,974 meters. Commence trekking at 8.30am to climb up Bamwanjara Pass, where the trail climbs steadily with several long flat bogs. The area is covered by everlasting flowers and Giant groundsel with the bogs being mainly tussock grass and Giant lobelia, whose nectar is the main food source for the Scarlet-tufted Malachite Sunbird (*Nectarinia johnstoni dartmouthi*) which is common in this area and unique to the Rwenzori Mountains. As you climb you look back to see the glacial lakes far below in the valley.

On reaching the top of Banwamjara Pass you get excellent views of all the main snow-capped peaks where we have a small shelter for you to rest and enjoy the scenery. The walk down to Kacholpe Lakes is steep and often very muddy but offers fantastic views of Kacholpe Lakes and McConnell's Prong. Butawu Camp (3,974m) is set on a ridge high above Butawu River which flows down from Scott Elliott Pass through Kitandara Lakes and has excellent views of the snow-capped Mt Baker.



Day 5 – Margherita Camp

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4.2 km Starting at 3.974 meters climbing to 4.485 meters.

Walk back along the ridge before crossing several wet areas and small rivers coming from Mt Baker and Freshfields Pass to join Butawu River. The walkup Scott Elliott Pass is enjoyable as you climb through the pass and up the ridge of Mt Stanley to Margherita Camp at 4,485 meters which is below Elena Hut. It is sheltered with a ring of high rocks and it is the original camp used by the Italian Prince Luigi Amadeo di Savoia, Duke of the Abruzzi, who mounted a very powerful expedition in 1906, composed of biologists, surveyors, a geologist and a photographer. The Italian led team, between June and July 1906 climbed the mountains, opening a new page in the history of mountaineering and exploration in Africa, and providing an answer to the most unresolved geographical questions in the region for centuries. Some of the peaks still have the names which the Duke chose to honor the Italian Kingdom and Queen Margherita - hence our naming this camp Margherita Camp. From here you have great views of Mt Baker, Scott Elliot Pass and some of the high glaciers on Mt Stanley.

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Day 6: Margherita Peak 5.109m

Day starts at 4,485 meters with a climb to Margherita Peak at 5,109 meters; return to Margherita Camp then descend to Butawu Camp at 3,974 meters to sleep. Distance of 3.5km to the peak then 3.5km return to Margherita Camp followed by 4.2km down to Butawu Camp. Total distance 11.2km.

Wake up at 4.30am, have a quick snack and start climbing so as to be on the Stanley Glacier before sunrise. The climb up from Elena can be difficult if covered in snow and ice but it is classed as a difficult scramble. Once on the Stanley glacier the going is easy however, the climb to Margherita glacier can be challenging and slippery in bad weather. Rwenzori Trekking Services has recently installed a new fixed static rope with bolts every three meters leading down a ledge to the top of a six-meter aluminum ladder. This is a safe route and anyone with reasonable fitness and head for heights is able to pass. It is not classed as technical and it is easy in dry conditions. The climb up Margherita glacier is steep and requires that you are fit. On getting near to the top of the glacier you then climb around an exposed section of rock, which is also bolted and roped, to get on the ridge running up to the top of Margherita Peak. On a clear day the views from Margherita Peak are awesome and your goal is achieved!

After summiting you then descend directly to Butawu Camp or in the case of bad weather, you may need to stay in Margherita Camp; however, the following day it will be necessary to bypass Butawu Camp directly to Bugata Camp.

Day 7: Bugata Camp

6.2km hike starting at 3,974 meters, climbing over 4,450 meters and sleeping at Bugata Camp 4,062 meters.

A late breakfast at 8.30am to start trekking by 9am. The climb up Bamwanjara Pass which is steep and in wet weather can be rather boggy makes it slow going and tiresome. While crossing the pass you get the chance to see hyrax sitting at the entrance to their rock shelter, warming in the sun. Their main predator is the Rwenzori Leopard *Panthera pardus ruwenzori*, which is rarely seen; occasionally people do get a glimpse. The leopard has been heavily poached for its skin in the

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past and there are few left. There is a skeleton nearby in a small rock shelter for those who doubt the existence of leopard at those heights. However, on a rare occasion on a misty or overcast day, you may be lucky to see one briefly as they move between the rocks. Sleep at Bugata Camp.

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Day 8: Kiharo Camp or Samalira Camp

Descend to either Kiharo Camp 3,460 metres or Samalira Camp 3,170 metres.

Early morning set off around Lake Bugata and the outlet of Kopello Lake, then climb 200 metres to the confluence of the two valleys. As you descend the upper areas of the Nyamwamba Valley there is a large area of thick Giant Groundsel with dense evergreen undergrowth and moss with the rocky peaks towering above. As you descend the valley you will notice the terrain is made up of several flat boggy areas where millions of years ago glaciers sat and since melted, leaving a wall of big rocks in front of where it lay. The valley is home to many Red Forest Duiker (*Cephalophus nigrifrons rubidus*). At night you may stay in Kiharo Camp at 3,460 metres, an area rich in evergreen plants and babbling streams. At night the air is filled with the calls of the rock hyrax in the rocky cliffs high above.

Note:- As it is necessary to skip one of the camps, you may either stay in Kiharo and enjoy the lush vegetation and rocky cliffs or may descend to Samalira Camp at 3,170 meters, making a shorter trek down to base camp the following day.

Day 9 of Trekking: back Hotel Magherita

Assuming that you slept in Kiharo Camp, you wake up to the shrill calls of the Rwenzori Turaco (*Ruwenzorornis johnstoni*) and other birds. After a hearty breakfast you walk down the valley which is home to many species of birds who dive in and out the thick vegetation. Chameleons are a common sight as they crawl along the branches of the thick vegetation feeding on insects. In the clear areas you may catch a glimpse of a Duiker quietly feeding surrounded by Giant Lobellias and a variety of flowering plants. After descending a few kilometres you climb two hundred metres up to a ridge overlooking the peaks. In the evening you will have returned to the hotel to rest after an amazing journey.

Day 12: Rwenzori Mountains NP - Entebbe

In the morning we drive back to Entebbe. Your Safari Guide will wish you goodbye and you can spend time relaxing after the exciting trekking and prepare for tomorrow's flight.



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Overnight at The Boma Guesthouse Entebbe (BB)

Day 13: Entebbe

Depending on your flight time, the guesthouse will drive you to the airport.

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USD per Person from	in \$	3,228	2,631	2,534	230.00
		2pax	4pax	6pax	single suppl

For Uganda itineraries and costs - customised to your specification and price range - *please get in touch with Manya Africa Tours!*

Please note:

1. Prices are valid for 2022 and 2023.
2. The safari indicated here is essentially an offer. Changes in the course of the journey, the duration of your tour, the number of travelers, as well as the choice of accommodation are subject to availability, although we always endeavour to stick as closely as possible to this programme. For the majority of itineraries, we can offer luxury, midrange or budget versions of this safari upon request.
3. Sometimes it is not possible to adhere to the travel plan as described in this itinerary, due to weather and road conditions, authority regulations, organizational requirements, etc. Occasionally, the planned route of the tour has to change according to the situation on the ground. We must therefore explicitly refuse liability for adherence to the journey plan.
4. By booking this safari, the client accepts Manya Africa Tours' terms and conditions of business, available to read on our web site.
5. For FAQs, including what equipment to bring for your Gorilla tracking, please visit our website.

Including

- All overnights in middle range accommodation before and after the trekking and in camps or huts whilst trekking
- All meals as mentioned in the program
- 4x4 Jeep
- Mountain equipment, ranger, porters, cook, gas, cooker
- Tents

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- National Park entry fees
- All transfers
- Taxes
- Water en route
- AMREF emergency evacuation insurance

Exclusive

- Visa to enter Uganda
- Alcoholic and other beverages
- Other meals
- Tips
- Activities which are not mentioned in the program
- International travel insurance
- Hiking boots, rain gear, warm clothes, sleeping bag