



KILIMANJARO PACKING CHECKLIST 2026

Verified by Senior Kilimanjaro Guides with 22+ Years Field Experience

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22 Years on the Mountain · 300+ Summit Ascents

WHAT'S INSIDE

Clothing
& Layering

Gear
& Equipment

Health
& Safety

Documents

Rental vs Buy
Guide

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BEFORE YOU PACK

How This Checklist Works

What This Checklist Is Based On

This is not a generic travel packing list assembled from blog research. Every item here comes from real operational experience on Mount Kilimanjaro:

- Real gear inspections conducted at Machame, Lemosho, and Marangu gates before every departure
- KPAP 20kg porter load compliance, built into every recommendation on what to bring versus rent
- Summit-night survival requirements at -12°C to -15°C , recorded at Barafu Camp (4,673m)
- Equipment failures observed across 300+ guided ascents — what breaks, what freezes, what causes turnarounds

■■ IMPORTANT

This is not a generic travel packing list. Items marked **essential** are safety-critical above 4,000m — not comfort preferences.

Need Your Gear Verified Before You Travel?

Tell us your route and departure date — we'll confirm exactly what to rent versus bring, with current Moshi pricing.

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Use this document as a working checklist. Tick items as you pack. The sections that follow are organized in the order most climbers find easiest to pack: safety-critical gear first, clothing system second, bags and logistics third, then health, electronics, rental decisions, route differences, and a final pre-departure check.

CORE SAFETY PAGE

Essential Mountain Safety Items

A. Sleep System

- Sleeping bag (−15°C **comfort** rating, not limit rating)
- Sleeping bag liner

B. Footwear

- Broken-in hiking boots (8+ hours of real use)
- Camp shoes or sandals
- Gaiters

C. Lighting

- Headtorch with fresh batteries

Plus a full spare set. Test it the night before departure.

D. Hydration

- 2 × 1L water bottles
NOT a disposable plastic bottle — single-use plastics are banned inside the national park.
- Insulated bottle sleeve(s)

* SIDEBAR WARNING

Hydration bladders freeze solid above 5,000m on summit night. The hose freezes first, then the reservoir. Use wide-mouth bottles in insulated sleeves for the summit push.

Why These Items Are Non-Negotiable

These six categories are what our guides physically check before any climber takes the first step from the gate. A missing or inadequate item here is the most common reason climbers struggle on summit night — not fitness, not altitude tolerance.

LAYERING PAGE

The Kilimanjaro Layering System

Four Layers, One System

Each layer has one job. Remove one and the system stops working as a whole.

Layer	Job	Temp Zone
Base	Moves sweat away from skin	18–25°C
Mid	Traps warm air	0 to 10°C
Outer	Blocks wind and rain	0 to –5°C
Summit	Insulates and protects together	–5 to –15°C

Guide Insight

Cotton clothing increases hypothermia risk at altitude due to moisture retention. Use synthetic or merino wool only — never cotton — in base and mid layers.

Base Layer

- Moisture-wicking tops (2–3)
- Thermal underwear / wicking layers (5–6 sets)
- Wool or synthetic hiking socks (5–6 pairs)

Mid Layer

- Fleece jacket or warm midlayer
- Thermal leggings (2 pairs)
- Warm hat
- Neck gaiter or buff

Outer Layer

- Waterproof hardshell jacket
- Waterproof over-trousers

Summit Layer — Critical

- Insulated down/synthetic jacket (–15°C rated)
- Insulated, waterproof gloves (NOT touch-screen gloves)
- Balaclava

BAG LOGISTICS

How Your Bag System Works on Kilimanjaro

YOU CARRY

Daypack · 20–35 litres

- Water
- Snacks
- Jacket layers
- Camera
- Rain protection
- Personal medications

PORTER CARRIES

Duffel bag · Max 20kg (KPAP)

- Duffel bag (80–100L)
- Sleeping system
- Clothing
- Extra gear

Ethics Box — KPAP Standard

Maximum load: **20kg per porter**, including the bag itself. This is enforced by the Kilimanjaro Porters Assistance Project (KPAP) and Kilimanjaro National Park.

Warning: Exceeding this limit creates real physical strain on the person carrying it at altitude. Pack to roughly 15kg net inside your duffel to stay safely within bounds.

Every kilogram packed over the KPAP limit either forces a porter to carry an illegal load or requires hiring a second porter to split the excess. This is one of the clearest ways your packing choices affect someone else's working conditions on the mountain.

WELLBEING ON THE MOUNTAIN

Altitude Safety & Health Kit

- Personal prescription medications
Bring a full supply plus several spare days.
- Diamox (acetazolamide)
Prescription required — discuss with your doctor before travel, not in Moshi.
- Ibuprofen or paracetamol
The most commonly used medication on the mountain.
- Sunscreen SPF 50+
UV exposure rises roughly 10% per 1,000m of altitude.
- Lip balm with SPF
- UV400 sunglasses
Glacier-style wraparound protection recommended for the summit push.
- Blister kit
Compeed or moleskin, sterile needle, antiseptic, tape. The most-used first aid item on Kilimanjaro.
- Wet wipes (2–3 packs)
The functional substitute for showering across the climb.
- Hand sanitizer
Essential near camp toilet facilities.

Guide Insight

Altitude headaches are normal and usually manageable. Ignoring hydration is the most common avoidable issue we see — drink consistently throughout the day, not only when you feel thirsty.

POWER ON THE MOUNTAIN

What Actually Works on the Mountain

 Headtorch

Fresh batteries plus a full spare set — already listed, reinforced here as non-negotiable.

 Power bank, minimum 20,000mAh

There is no electrical power at any camp on any route.

 Phone

Offline use only above roughly 4,000m on most routes.

 Camera

Spare battery required — keep it warm, close to your body, during the summit approach.

 Charging cables

Bring a spare if possible.

*** Warning**

Cold reduces battery efficiency by up to 40% above 4,000m. Keep your power bank and spare batteries inside your sleeping bag overnight — alkaline batteries hold up better than rechargeables in extreme cold.

DECISION PAGE

What to Rent in Moshi vs Bring From Home

Item	Recommendation
Sleeping bag (-15°C)	Rent if this is your first climb
Down / summit jacket	Rent
Trekking poles	Rent, or bring a familiar set
Duffel bag	Rent
Gaiters	Rent
Hiking boots	Always bring your own, broken in
Balaclava	Buy — cheap enough to own

Best Strategy

- Bring footwear and base layers from home — fit and break-in matter most here.
- Rent bulky insulation (sleeping bag, summit jacket) in Moshi — it's cheaper and you avoid checked-baggage weight.

Ask any rental shop: What is the comfort rating of this sleeping bag — not the limit rating? When was it last tested or replaced? Has this jacket been seam-sealed? Are the pole locking mechanisms functioning? Contact Kilimania directly for current confirmed rental prices for your dates.

SMART PLANNING

Does Your Route Change What You Pack?

The core checklist applies to every route. A few specific differences are worth knowing before you pack:

Route	Duration	Packing Note
Machame	6–7 days	Heavy rainforest start — waterproofs used from day one
Lemosho	7–8 days	Longer route — pack extra base layers and more layering flexibility
Rongai	5–6 days	Drier northern start — less early rain gear use
Northern Circuit	9 days	Longest route — extra socks and hygiene items recommended
Marangu	5–6 days	Hut accommodation — sleeping mat not required; camp shoes matter more

Unsure which route fits your timeline and fitness? Message us your dates on WhatsApp and we will walk you through the options — no obligation.

CONVERSION PAGE

Final Pre-Departure Check

- All essential gear packed and verified against this checklist
- Porter duffel weighed and under 15kg net
- Boots broken in for a minimum of 8 hours
- Travel insurance confirmed to cover altitude up to 5,895m
- Rental gear confirmed and booked in Moshi

Ready to Confirm Your Gear?

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Base: Moshi, Kilimanjaro Region, Tanzania
Daily departures from JRO & ARK

We Walk With You

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