

RWENZORI MOUNTAINS

Mt. Stanley, 8-day Climb

Climb Africa's third highest mountain, Mt Stanley, on this 8-day journey into the remote Mountains of the Moon.



Day 1 Arrive Entebbe

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Arrive Entebbe. Overnight in a centrally-located hotel.

We can arrange your international flights to Uganda and your accommodation in Entebbe for you. Please note that these are not included in our published climb rates.

Day 2 Transfer Entebbe to Kasese. Overnight at local hotel.

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Transfer from Entebbe to Kasese by road or air (please note if flying: internal airlines in Uganda enforce a 15kg maximum allowance for hand and main luggage combined). On arrival, you will be met at the airstrip by the local climb team and transferred to the Sandton Hotel for dinner and overnight.

Accommodation in Kasese

There are a range of hotels and guesthouses available to suit different budgets in and around Kasese and in nearby Fort Motel, from very basic lodges (the Trekkers Hostel) to comfortable hotels (Hotel Sandton), as well as safari lodges in nearby Queen Elizabeth National Park. Please contact us for alternative options.

Day 3 To Sine Hut – 9.5km

B, L, D

After an early breakfast at the Sandton, transfer to the Trekkers Hostel in the nearby village of Kilembe, start point for our treks into the Rwenzoris. Following a final kit check and briefing, set off on foot from the Hostel for the Rwenzori park gates.

Today's walk is approx. 9.5 km, expected time 5 to 7 hours. The start height is 1,450 metres, climbing to 2,598 metres. Leaving the Trekkers' Hostel at approx. 10am, you walk 2.2km to the UWA rangers post at 1,727m, where you will be briefed on the rules of the Rwenzori National Park.

As you leave the rangers post you walk along a path through tall grassland and ferns which gives way to magnificent rainforest. The forest here is largely untouched and the plant and animal life stunning. Many species of bird can be heard and seen in this rich environment, as can Chimpanzees and Colobus monkeys – though sightings of the former are very rare!



Upon entering the forest, the first few kilometres of the trail climb steadily, crossing several small streams and rivers. The trail becomes gradually steeper as you approach your first camp at Sine Hut, located just below the bamboo zone on a narrow ridge.

Day 4 To Mutinda Camp – 6.1km

B, L, D



Commence walking after a hearty breakfast. Today's trail climbs steadily to begin with, as you enter the bamboo zone and then continue onto a steep moss-covered ridge about 200m in height. The thick moss covering the ground and rocks is spectacular and we ask you to help preserve this pristine environment by keeping to the trail. Please note that this section of the trail can be exceptionally muddy – rubber boots are essential!

As you near the top of the ridge and exit the bamboo forest, you'll be greeted with stunning views of the valleys and hills below, stretching as far as Lake George and Queen Elizabeth National Park.

You'll be in the giant heather zone now, as you approach Kalalama Camp (3,150m), perched on a high ridge overlooking Kilembe.

After a brief rest at Kalalama Camp, continue along an undulating trail to Mutinda Camp. The trail becomes less steep from here on out, and will soon see you drop down into the valley. Expect to reach Mutinda Camp (3,590m) late afternoon.

Day 5 To Bugata Camp – 8.6km

B, L, D

Your starting height today is 3,590 metres, climbing to 4,200 metres at the confluence between the Nyamwamba and Namusangi Valleys, before dropping to Bugata Camp at 4,100m.

Dropping down to the valley floor, you will trek through a beautiful landscape of tussock grasses and everlasting flowers, interspersed with giant lobelias. This section of the trail is particularly scenic, but can also be very boggy – have your rubber boots at the ready.

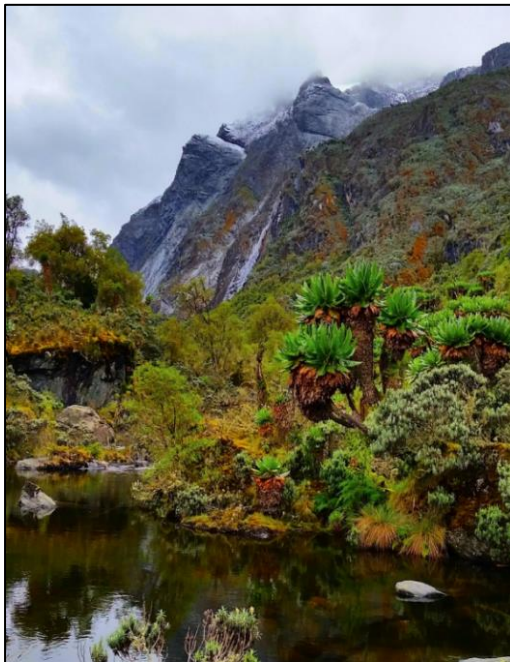
The trail soon begins to climb more steeply as you approach the entrance of the Namusangi Valley (3,840m), and then continue up the valley towards Bugata Camp, at 4,100m.



Bugata Camp (4,100m) is situated above Lake Kopello, with spectacular views down into the Namusangi, the valley of the nine glacier lakes.

Day 6 To Hunwick's Camp – 8.3km

B, L, D



Today's route is designed to help you acclimatise. Starting at 4,100m, you climb to the top of the Bamwanjara Pass (4,450m), before dropping to Hunwick's Camp at 3,975m, allowing you to rest tonight at a slightly lower altitude.

It is a short but steep climb to the top of Bamwanjara Pass, where you will be greeted with spectacular views of the main peaks, including Mt Stanley, provided the weather is fine. From the Pass it is a steady descent down to the Kachope Lakes.

The Kachope Lakes area is one of three known areas of the mountains where the rare Rwenzori Leopard can be seen. Little research has been done on this animal, which is considered even rarer than the Snow Leopard – sightings are not expected, but keep an eye out just in case!

After passing the Lakes, it is a short climb to Hunwick's Camp at 3,975m.

Day 7 To Margherita Camp – 5.1km

B, L, D

Today's walk is a relatively easy ascent. Leaving Hunwick's Camp, you trek past Kitandara Lake before beginning a steady climb to Scott Elliott pass and, finally, Margherita Camp (4,485m), situated at the top of the pass with fantastic views to Lake Bujuku and Mt Speke in the north, and the Kitandara Lakes and Weismann Peak to the south.

Margherita Camp marks the very spot where the Duke of Abruzzi set up camp when preparing for his ascent of Margherita Peak in 1906.

After an early supper, retreat to your hut and a good rest before tonight's summit attempt.

Day 8 To Margherita Peak / Stanley Viewpoint – 12.7km

B, L, D

***Note for prospective Margherita Peak climbers** - Due to the receding ice, the climb to Margherita Peak is becoming increasingly challenging, particularly the final climb onto the Margherita Glacier. Prior experience of Alpine climbing – including use of crampons and ice axe, and of climbing on a belay and abseiling – is essential if you are to attempt Margherita Peak. For trekkers without such experience, there is the option to stay on the Stanley Plateau and climb up to a good vantage point on a rocky outcrop on the southern edge of Alexandra Peak, from where you can enjoy fantastic views out to the Congo and the lower mountain ridges. Below we cover both options.*

You wake at 2am and set off at approx. 2:30am after tea or coffee and an energy snack. It usually takes about one and a half hours to reach Elena Hut (4,540m) which we bypass on the way to the peaks. After Elena, you will climb a steep gully to reach the edge of the Stanley glacier – you may encounter loose rock here so take your time with this section of the climb and, if you are unsure of your footing, ask your guide to rope you up.



Crossing the Stanley Plateau, with Alexandra Peak visible in the foreground, and Margherita Peak in the background.

You reach the edge of the Stanley Glacier at 4,765m, where you will need to put on crampons and harnesses at set distances. Although the crevasse risk is low, your guide will lead the way and ensure you take the safest route.

The scenery is spectacular and as you approach the upper glacier and the saddle between the two peaks, Alexandra and Margherita, the sun will hopefully just be peeping over the horizon, giving you a chance for fantastic photographs.

At this point, the routes to Margherita Peak and the Stanley Viewpoint diverge. You will have discussed with your guide in advance whether you will be targeting Margherita Peak, and weather conditions on the day will also have a bearing on your end goal.



Stanley Viewpoint

The Stanley Viewpoint is located at the base of Alexandra Peak. On crossing the Stanley Plateau, you branch off to the left. The receding ice has meant that the glacier has effectively been split in two in recent years, and there is a bit of easy rock scrambling as you climb to the upper section of the glacier.

Reaching the rocks at the base of the viewpoint, you'll have a further rock scramble. This is an easy scramble, but exposed in places, and you will be roped to your guide for safety. Taking the climb at a slow pace, it may take 20-30 minutes to reach the top of the viewpoint.

Arriving at the viewpoint, you'll be – weather permitting! – rewarded with marvellous views west into the Congo and north to Margherita Peak. There will be time for photos and to rest, before making the return journey across the Stanley Plateau and back down to high camp.

Margherita Peak summit climb

On crossing the Stanley Plateau, you will contour around the rocky outcrop separating Alexandra and Margherita Peaks, then descend to the base of the Margherita Glacier.

The climb onto the upper Margherita Glacier is challenging, involving an ascent of approx. 200m at an average 60-degree angle of steepness. You will be relying on your crampons for grip, and at times you will need to pull yourself up with the aid of your ice axe, while at other points the thinning ice may make this difficult. You will be roped to your guides (front and back) during the glacier climb, and it is most important that you follow their advice.



Once you have ascended the glacier, it is a short but steep climb to the top of Margherita Peak, during which you will be roped up. At times the rocks are covered with snow and ice and may be slippery but for the most part it is firm rock. The summit is exposed and you will need to cross a small ridge to reach the highest point.

The exhilaration of reaching the top is enormous as you look across Albert Peak to the DRC, then east across the spectra of the Rwenzori Mountains. After enjoying the scenery and signing the book, you descend back down to Margherita Camp via the same path.

Depending on the time taken during your ascent and your energy levels, your guide may suggest continuing down to Hunwick's Camp. Otherwise, you rest tonight at Margherita Camp.

Starting at a height of 4,485m and climbing to 5,109m (Margherita Peak) or 4,908m (Stanley Viewpoint), today's climb will take an estimated 10-13 hours – 6-8 hours up and 4-5 hours down.

Day 9 To Kiharo Camp – 15.8km (from Hunwick's) B, L, D

Leaving Hunwick's Camp, you climb up a high ridge to reach McConnell's Prong, where, on a clear day, you'll be greeted with views of all three peaks (Stanley, Baker and Weismann) and Scott Elliott's Pass. Continue climbing to reach Oliver's Pass, at 4,505m. The distance from Hunwick's Camp to the top of Oliver's Pass is 3km.

The trail then cuts below Weismann's Peak to the confluence of the Nyamwamba River, which flows down through Kilembe and Kasese to Lake George in Queen Elizabeth National Park.

After crossing the confluence, the trail meanders down the Namusangi Valley to Kiharo Camp (3,430m), sheltered beneath high cliffs and dense vegetation. This section of the trail will see you descend on the opposite side of the valley to that walked on day 5.

Day 10 To Kilembe – 14.6km B, L, D



Today you descend via the Nyamwamba Valley across open moorland and large areas of tussock grass. As this is a valley floor, it is rather wet and at times boggy. It is a good idea to have your rubber boots ready for this section.

You will be trekking on a route first tackled by explorer and geologist McConnell in the 1930s. It's a particularly beautiful section of the Rwenzoris, as the open moorland and heath gives way to the forested lowlands of the Rwenzoris. You'll be following the river for much of the route, passing a number of waterfalls along the way.

Expect to reach the Ranger's Post – a distance of 12km – early afternoon. From the Ranger's Post, it is a short walk down to Kilembe and the Trekkers Hostel.

On arrival at the Hostel, enjoy a late lunch before transferring to the Sandton Hotel in Kasese for dinner and overnight.

Day 11 Departure

Your itinerary ends this morning in Kasese. We can arrange for your transfer back to Entebbe/Kampala if required.

If you are continuing with a safari to Queen Elizabeth or gorilla tracking in Bwindi, your driver and guide will meet you this morning at your hotel for the start of your safari.

Price Guide:

*The cost of this itinerary is **£1,620 per person**, based on 1-2 travellers. Lower rates apply for groups of 3+.*

This price is inclusive of Rwenzori park fees and accommodation before and after the climb, but does not include transfers to/from Entebbe. Please see our [Rwenzori price guide](#) for basic climb rates independent of accommodation and transfers.

Includes:

- Accommodation as outlined in itinerary
- Meals as outlined in itinerary
- Kasese airstrip transfers
- Fully-supported climb to Mt Stanley
- Rwenzori park fees

Excludes:

- International flights – please ask us for a quote
- Transfers between Entebbe/Kampala and Kasese
- Visas
- Personal expenses and tips

Important note: Margherita summit is a technical climb, and has become more challenging in recent years as the melting of the glaciers has exposed more loose and slippery rock. Knowledge of how to walk with crampons and use an ice axe, and some Alpine experience of walking on a rope, abseiling and belaying, will be essential to help you manage and enjoy your climb. Guidance is provided on the mountain and you will be led by experienced guides during summit night; however, prior experience of basic Alpine climbing is necessary for you to consider Margherita Peak.

Please note that, depending on the condition of the trails, your precise hiking route may vary from that detailed in the above itinerary.